

Ulrich Middeldorf

1094 ——— Life of Thomas Stothard. With personal Reminiscences by Mrs. Bray.

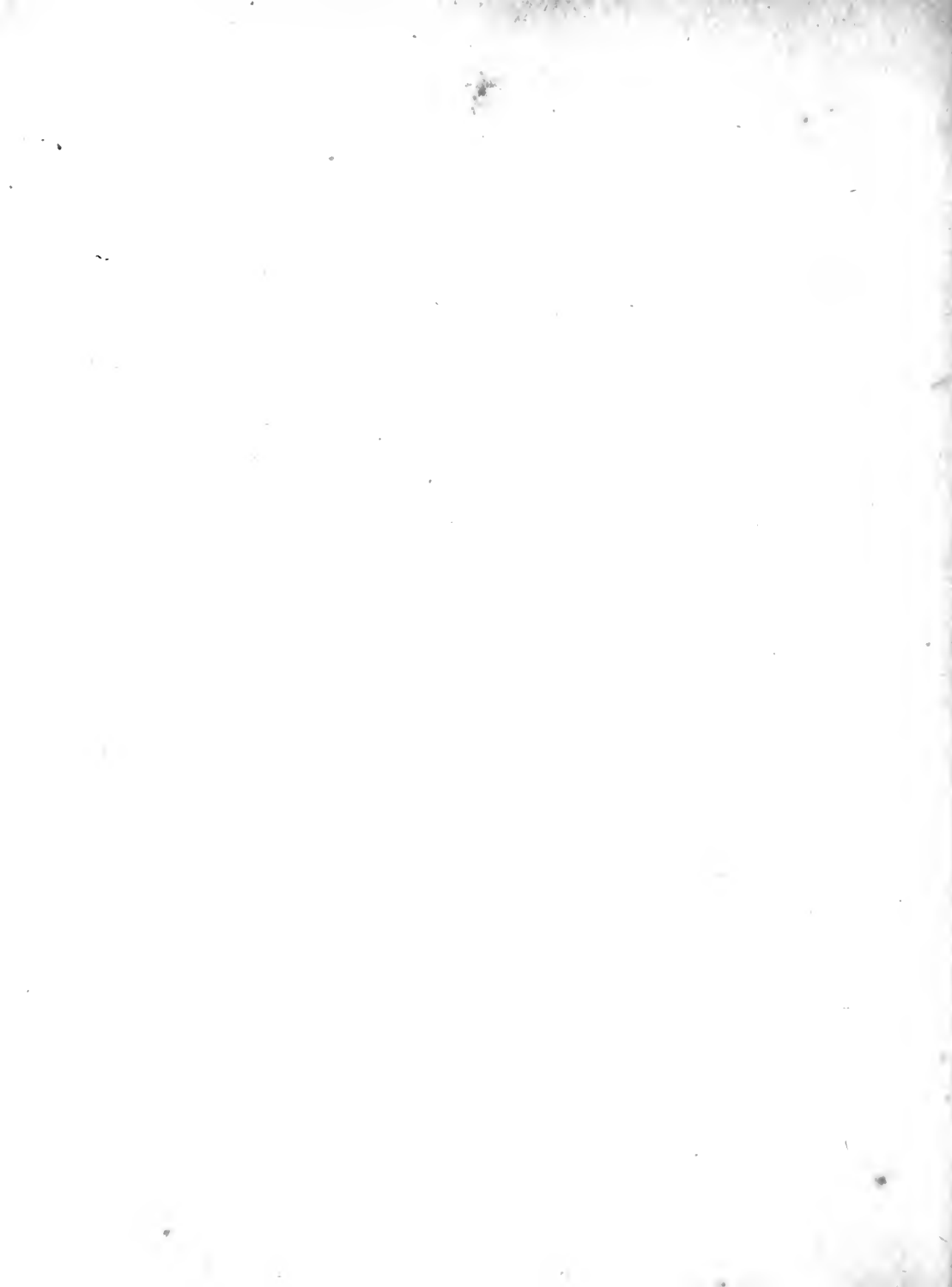
1 vol. in 2, 8vo., inlaid to roy. folio, with portrait and numerous text-illustrations; extra illustrated by the insertion of 197 engravings, an A.L.s. and 13 original drawings all inlaid to size and bound in; half levant morocco, rubbed. 1851 £60 \$168.00

The engravings range in size from 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 3' 1"

 and in subject from cupids and putti to Robinson Crusoe. They include plates from the Vicar of Wakefield, the Decameron, Pilgrim's Progress, the Novelists' Magazine, 7 proofs of the Wellington shield, and large engravings of the Canterbury Pilgrims and John Gilpin. The a.l.s. is a book binding order from Stothard to Cadell and Davis. The originals by Stothard are all of good quality and include a pen and wash drawing of George III surrounded by the cardinal virtues, some impressive studies of nudes and drapery, a drawing of the skeleton of a mammoth, and a very fine pen and ink sketch of Hermes and an old man asleep.

The collection has been intelligently selected and gives a very good idea of Stothard's best work.



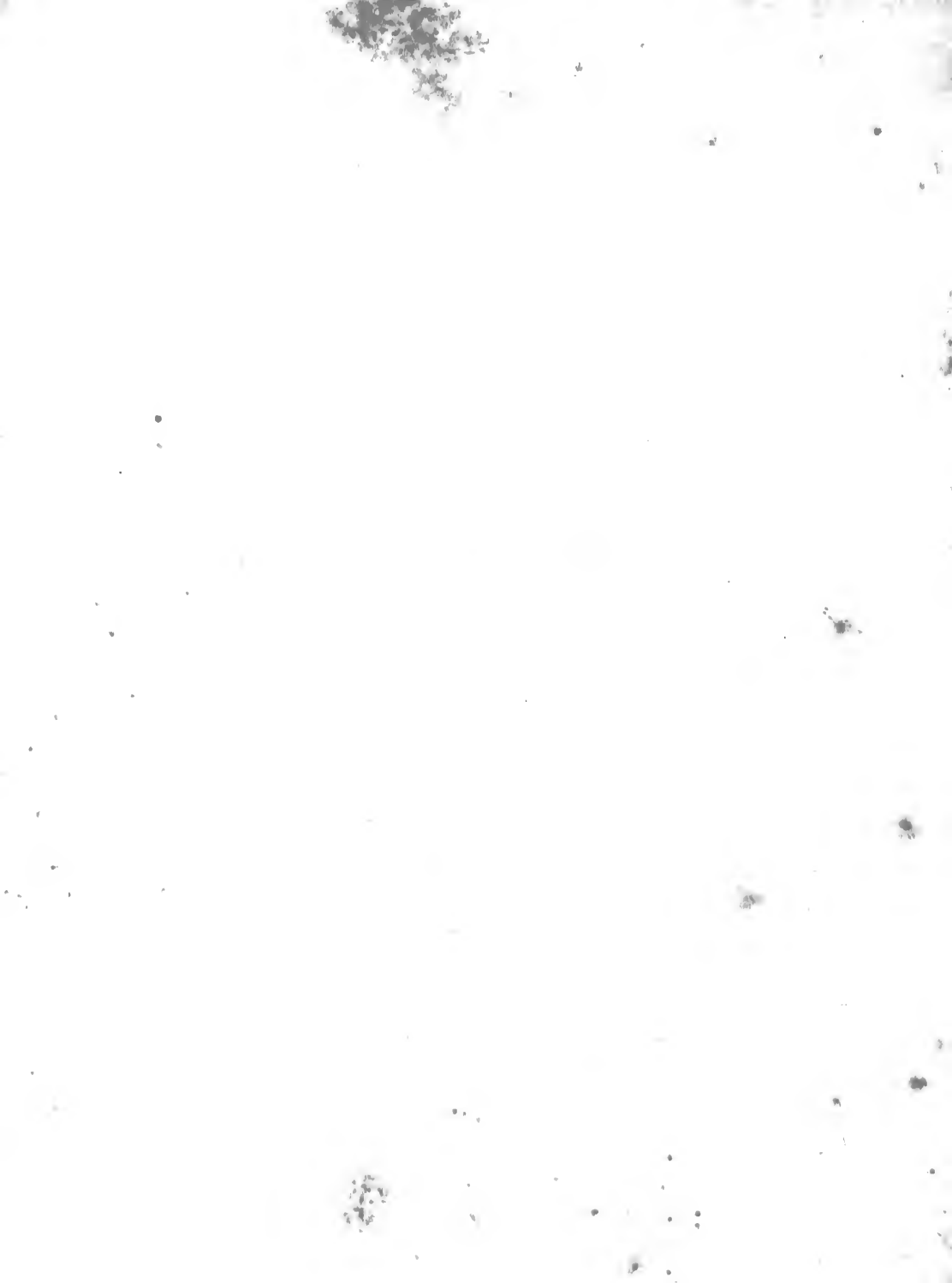


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Account No. 1 +



HARRIS W. WHITNEY

J. HANE LITH

yours affectly
Thos. Stothard







LIFE
OF
THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A.

WITH PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

By MRS. BRAY,

Author of "The Borders of the Tamar and the Tavy," "Memoirs of Charles A. Stothard, F.S.A.,"
"Trelawny," "Trials of the Heart," &c., &c.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS WORKS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1851.

BRADBURY AND EVANS,
PRINTERS EXTRAORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
WHITEFRIARS.

V



ADVERTISEMENT.



IN the year 1836, two articles of mine, entitled “Reminiscences of Stothard,” were published in the May and June numbers of Blackwood’s Magazine. In 1845, Mr. Alfred Stothard, son of the late historical painter, and himself a medallist of great ability, passed some little time with us at Tavistock. During his visit, he expressed his regret that he had not been made acquainted with my intention to write the articles on his father, as he could have furnished me with some additional information. These, therefore, I revised, corrected, and re-modelled; and embodied in them not only the particulars I received from so authentic a source, but added also many from my own recollections; till at length, the work grew so much upon me, that I determined to throw it into a more biographical form.

After I had thus enlarged and completed my task, it was suggested to me by Mr. Murray, that it would be desirable, if possible, to obtain some original letters of Stothard. In the hope of being enabled to do this, I applied to Mr. Alfred Stothard,

who kindly lent all the papers he had of his late father. These principally consisted of letters to and from his wife; with some rude drafts of others to various persons on matters of business connected with his profession; and two very briefly written diaries of journeys to Edinburgh and Derbyshire, whilst engaged in his pursuits. All these documents I most carefully examined.

I found the letters addressed to Mrs. Stothard evinced kind and good feelings as a husband and a father; but, for the greater part, so much were they of a private nature, as to contain little information for the public. From these, therefore, I selected only a few extracts, to show how strong were his domestic affections.

Respecting letters and papers of a more general or professional character, I grieve to say, I could find but few that were in a state for publication, or would have possessed any interest with the reader. Most of them were fragments, unfinished drafts, or rude memoranda, and usually without dates; some with so many obliterations, and in so imperfect a state, that they could not be clearly understood, and thus were useless. I have, therefore, been compelled to give but very few.

In justice to myself I have stated this; as it will, in some measure, account for a want of exact regularity as to the order in which they are placed. Indeed, I have frequently felt the difficulty, in some instances the impossibility, of following the principal events





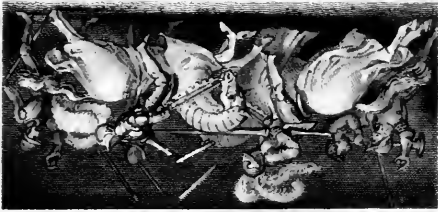
of Stothard's life in strict chronological order. Those who were most intimately acquainted with the early part of his career are no longer living; and, from natural modesty and reserve, he seldom, if ever, talked about himself.

The plan of giving illustrations from the works of a great painter, with some account of his life, originated with Mr. Leslie, R.A., in his *Memoirs of Constable*; Mr. Murray has, in some measure, adopted it as the precedent and example in the style of illustrating the present volume. To that eminent artist I am indebted for two or three characteristic anecdotes of his brother Academician, and for the extract from a lecture which he recently delivered at the Royal Academy respecting the productions of Stothard's pencil.

To Mr. Carpenter, of the British Museum, my thanks are due for his great kindness and attention in enabling me to profit by the engravings from the works of Stothard, under his care, in the print-room of that National Institution. To Miss Denman, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Windus, I am also indebted for having most obligingly allowed some of his designs, in their possession, to be copied for these pages.

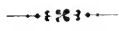
ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

THE VICARAGE, TAVISTOCK,
November, 1851.

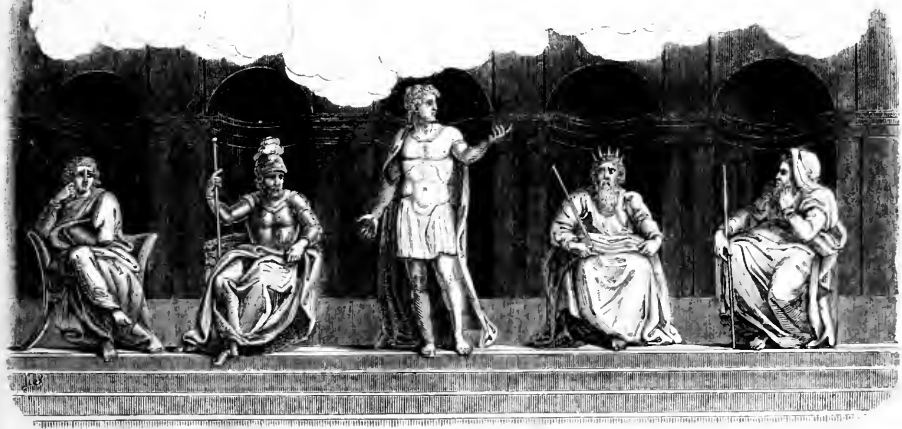




REMINISCENCES
OF
THOMAS STOTHARD,
R. A.



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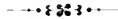




These, as they change,
ALMIGHTY FATHER these
Are but the varied GOD.
The rolling year
Is full of THEE

Engraved by J. G. Kneller. Printed by W. M. G. & Co. New York.

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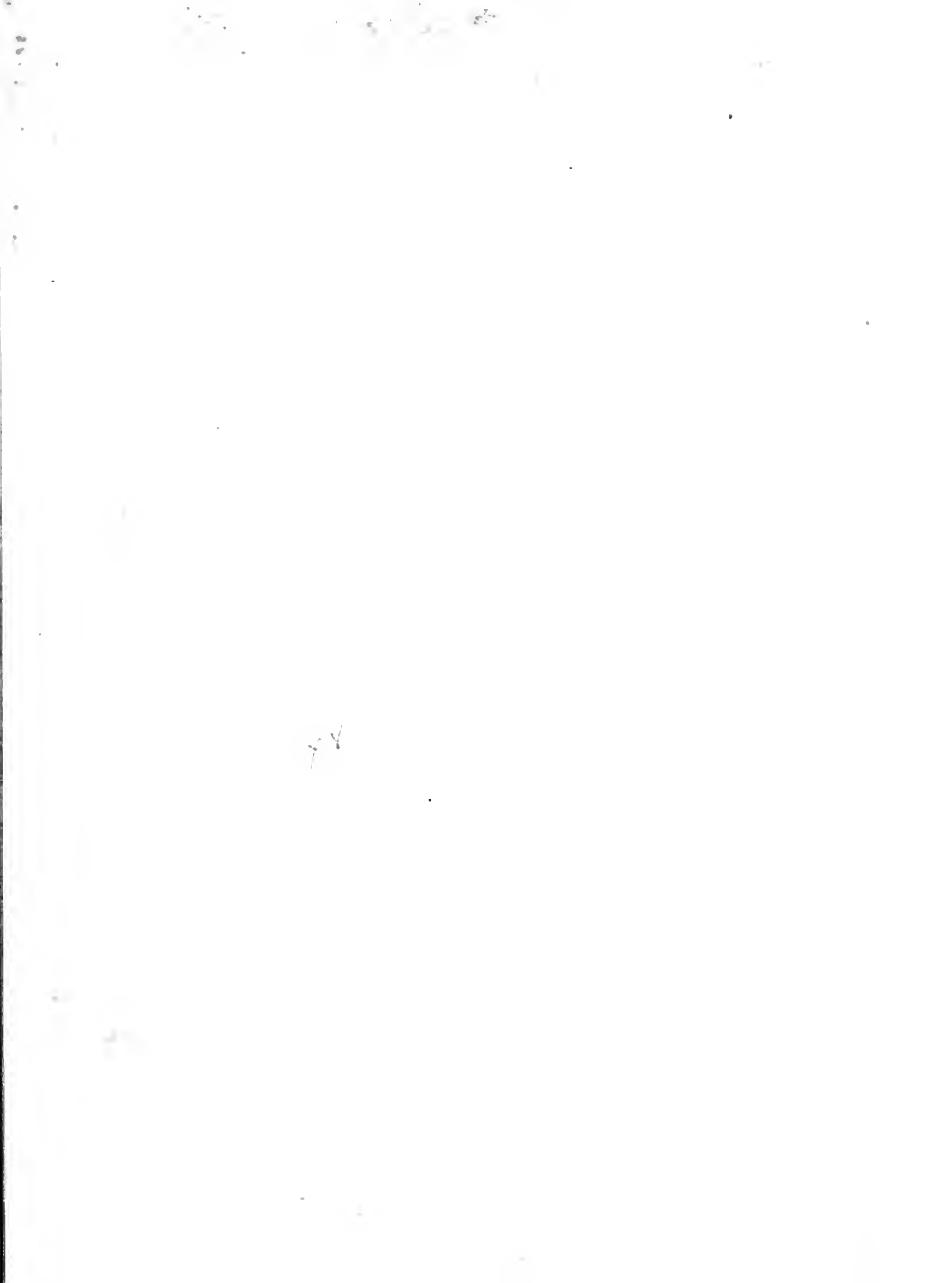
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INTRODUCTION.



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THE circumstance of having been not only intimately acquainted, and for many years, with the great and good man whose name stands at the head of these pages, but also, in early life, having been the wife and widow of his lamented son Charles, first induced me to throw together a few reminiscences respecting him. These, I trust, will be found of some interest, not only to those who personally knew him, but to many who were his admirers as an artist, and who feel desirous to learn what they can of the private as well as public life of such eminent persons as have done honour to their country by the exertion of their genius, their influence, and their moral worth.

In all these respects the name of Stothard deserves veneration ; since he was excellent, not less as a man than as a painter : and as

my acquaintance with him commenced by a circumstance that evinced a kind and amiable trait in his character, I trust I may be pardoned in relating it here; the more so, as it will occupy but a brief space in my narrative, and will not, I hope, be found tedious to my readers. It may also be of some use to the young student in art, when he sees with how much good-nature and consideration the really eminent encourage the efforts of industry, and will condescend to advise and direct those who are anxious to follow a well-regulated course in their studies and pursuits.

In early youth I had a great fondness for drawing, which had never been cultivated by any instruction; and I attempted to paint a picture (in miniature) without knowing a single rule of Art. It is almost needless to say it was a very wretched performance; but it showed a love of the Art, and my dear father (who had some taste and skill in the Arts himself, though not in heads and figures, to which I inclined) fancied that he saw in my "Madonna and Child"—for such was the ambitious subject—more than any one else could have discovered, namely, a promise of talent beyond the ordinary run in young persons who have a wish to excel in painting. No critic would be very severe upon a parent for such an error as this.

My dear father viewed my attempt with great satisfaction; and it so happened that, on the very day I had presented it finished before him, he was going to dine in the neighbourhood of St. James's, at a house where he used to meet some acquaintances





of the old school, who had formed themselves into a club. This little society contained so many oddities, that, had Addison been living in these latter times, he might have found in it many a hint for the richness of his humour in his own picture of a club recorded in the Spectator.

One of the members was a gentleman in the army; a Captain Watkins (for my father's club, like his just named, had a Captain in it), who had the honour of being brother-in-law to Thomas Stothard, the great historical painter; and the subject of the following reminiscences. This gentleman was of the party on the day to which I have already referred, when my father, who usually filled the president's chair, being seated therein, and invested with all due honour, after giving the King and the Church, drew from his pocket, with a much higher eulogium than it deserved, my very poor and juvenile performance of the "Madonna and Child." How complacent are men and critics when seated round a bottle of wine! None of the company knew much about the Arts; my father was by far the best judge of the party; but he looked at the painting through the spectacles of parental affection, and those are never formed of diminishing glasses. The picture was handed round, and by all present pronounced, *nem. con.* (the youth of the artist considered), to be indicative of a taste deserving encouragement and cultivation; and Captain Watkins concluded his remarks upon it, by saying—"Let me be of use: let me introduce picture and artist to my brother-in-law, Mr. Stothard, the Academician, and hear what he

has to say about it ; he is ever ready to do all he can to benefit a student or lover of the Arts.”

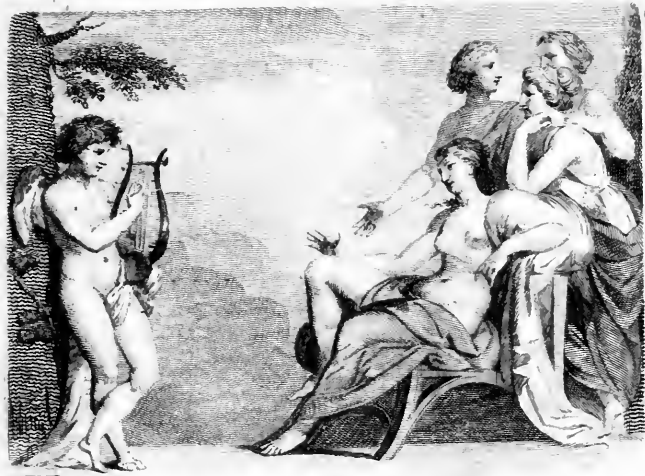
My father was pleased with the proposal, and asked the Captain to dinner. He came as invited ; the appointment was speedily made to wait on Mr. Stothard ; and thus, reader, to my father's club was I indebted for my introduction to our great historical painter, at his own house in Newman Street ; where, for the first time, I saw our English Raphael seated in his painting-room, and busied over his fine picture of “Hector and Andromache.”

“HAMLET.—Methinks I see him now !

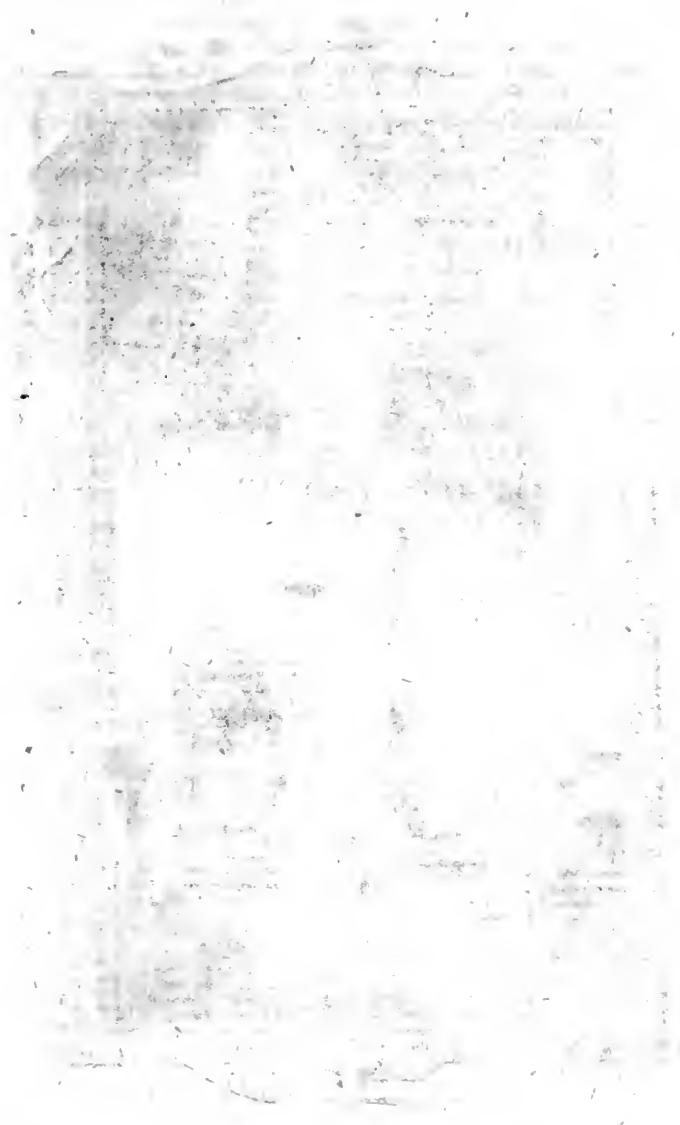
“HORATIO.—O ! where, my Lord ?

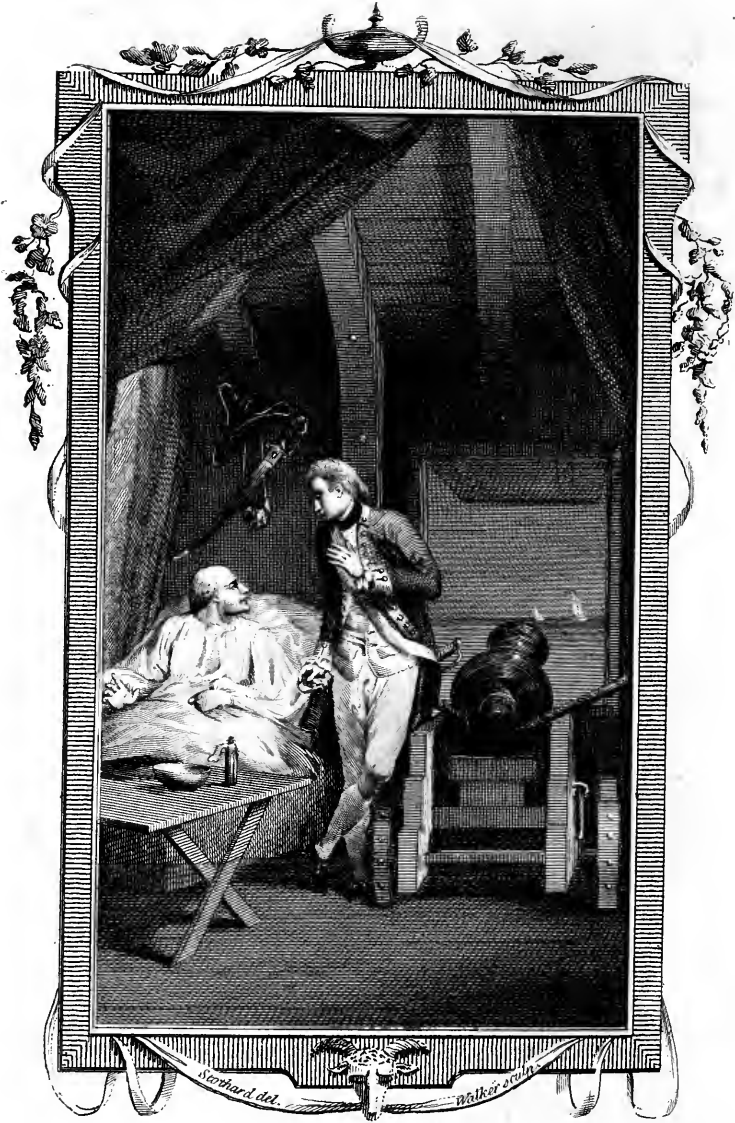
“HAMLET.—In my mind's eye, Horatio.”

So may I say of Stothard, for well do I remember him at that first meeting. I remember the morning I prepared to go to him ; how I looked at my poor picture, this way, that way, in the glass, out of the glass ; how I tried to look it into something much better than it was, before it appeared at the bar of judgment. I carried it in my hand all the way we were rumbling along ; it was shut up in a small box, with a sliding lid, that had been my grandmother's. The box was a piece of family pride, for it had originally belonged to Queen Anne, and was traditionally said to have been given by her Majesty to my great-aunt ; with a little old-fashioned mirror, covered at the back with chased silver monkeys. I never shall forget the feeling of trepidation with which I drew out that lid of my grandmother's box, to show the picture to Mr. Stothard ; for



++





THE FALSE ALARM.

I can truly say, that I did not think my performance to be the wonder it had been pronounced to be by the company at my father's club. But Stothard was not the man to discourage or dishearten any one. In him, I soon found, as in all truly great men, that there was a good-nature about him towards the student which soon dispelled all fear, and made the young aspirant feel perfectly at ease in his presence.

He did not expect to meet with great things from little means ; he did not criticise on a beginner as he would on a master. He considered the attempts of an uneducated artist as attempts only, and estimated them not for what they were, but for what they indicated the hand that had achieved them might become under a judicious schooling in art. Stothard, in this respect, resembled some great men I could name in literature, who are ever more ready to commend and to encourage than the little critics, those I mean who deem themselves critics, and who often possess not one essential requisite for true criticism ; the first qualification for such an office being (as Stothard himself has not unfrequently remarked) a thorough acquaintance with the subject on which the critic is to sit in judgment. To throw a stone is an easy thing, but to hit the mark requires a practised eye, as well as a true hand.

The generosity, the kindness, and the manly judgment (never flattering nor needlessly severe) of Stothard as a critic are well known to all who sought his opinion or his advice, with a view to their own benefit. In his disposition there was not even the

shadow of envy. He loved the art in which he excelled; he admired it for its own excellence, and by whom it was produced was to him indifferent. His own sons never received a flattering commendation from him because of their affinity; nor did any personal opposition ever draw from him a disparaging remark on the works of another, if they deserved praise for their intrinsic merit.* It was to such a critic and such a man that I was introduced by Captain Watkins.

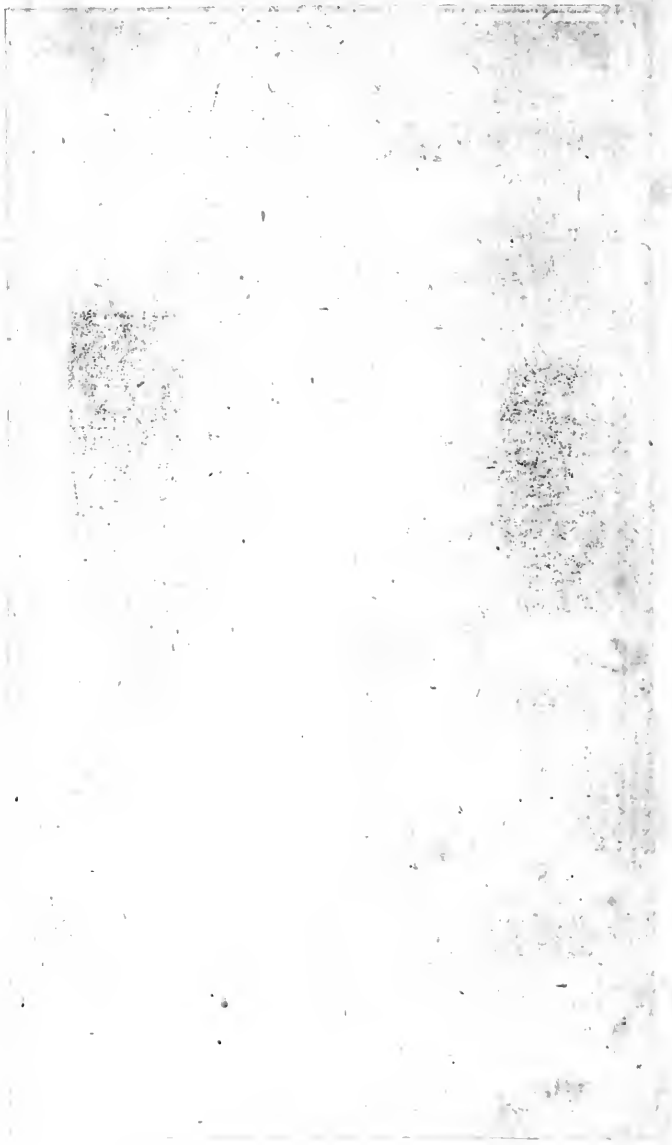
The great artist was in his painting-room when we arrived. That room in which, as a more than ordinary favour, we were permitted to take a peep. The painting-room was tolerably large, it possessed the very necessary advantage of an excellent light, and was so filled with pictures, drawings, portfolios, books, prints, and all the *et cetera* of a studio, that there was not, literally, a vacant chair for a visitor, who was favoured by being admitted into the

* An instance of this was related to me by Mr. Alfred Stothard himself. In 1823 he was a competitor for the premiums awarded by the Royal Academy in two several departments of art. He was successful in gaining both. These premiums were awarded by the votes of the Academicians. In the Bas-relief competition, ten specimens were laid before the members. The celebrated sculptor, Mr. Flaxman, inquired of Mr. Stothard for whom he proposed voting, and added, "of course for your son." Mr. Stothard said, in answer, "In a matter of this nature, my son is not my son; it must not be a thing of course.

His bas-relief does not seem to me to be of so bold a character as any one of the other nine. I shall not vote for him." "Before you say so," replied Mr. Flaxman, "come with me and closely examine it, and you will see it is executed more in the style for which the competition has been proposed (a bas-relief in low relief) than any other, and deserves the premium." Mr. Flaxman then led Mr. Stothard to the model, and they examined it together. The premium was awarded to the son of the latter; and much the same thing happened in respect to the other prize he gained in another branch, that of medal engraving.

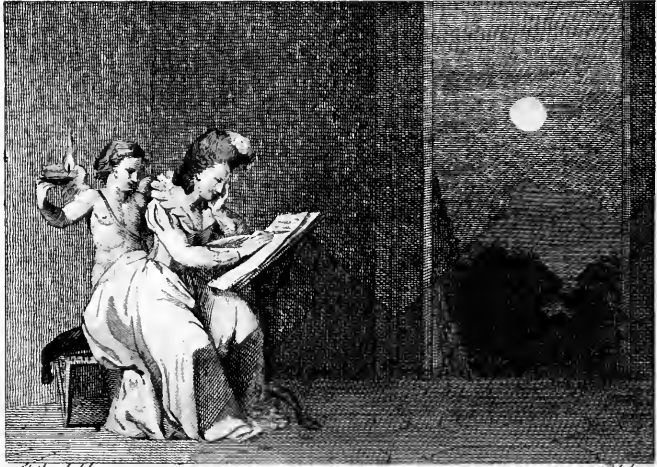


The Departure; or, Parental Fondness.



FALL

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Stollhard del.

W. B. Kneller sc.

sanctum sanctorum. In some drawers in the same apartment there was, beautifully preserved, a most gorgeous collection of butterflies, collected by Stothard himself, in the fields near Norwood and Highgate. These, he said, were not only beautiful objects in themselves, but that they afforded fine studies for the arrangement and harmony of colour ; for nothing could exceed those to be found on the wings of these insects. Stothard was a great observer of the harmony of colour in the order of nature. Flowers were, likewise, favourite objects with him, for the same reason ; and he generally had his china jars filled with some most beautiful nosegays, that he was in the habit of choosing himself, and purchasing in Covent Garden market, early in the spring and summer mornings. He showed us some masterly sketches in oil, that he had painted hastily, as any choice flower in these nosegays had happened to strike his fancy. He told me that sketching flowers in this way, from nature, was a good method to acquire facility of pencilling ; and, by such advice, I afterwards practised it in oil.

On first seeing Stothard on that memorable day, I was much struck with the marked and impressive character of his head. The brows, that deeply overshadowed the eyes, were replete with thought. He looked like a man you would expect to find abstracted and often absent in his manner ; but there was a gentle and benevolent, as well as intellectual, expression in his countenance, that was exceedingly pleasing. As a whole, his was, strictly speaking, a philosophical head : for it possessed that union of

thoughtfulness and repose, which shows how much the passions and feelings of the man are in constant subjection to his reason. His eye was very fine, and the mouth indicated great sweetness of temper—his was a countenance that invited trust, it was so thoroughly expressive of a guileless simplicity of heart,—and such a heart he possessed! for no man ever more deserved the praise conveyed in that celebrated line—

“In wit a man, simplicity a child!”



Alfred in the Danish Camp: from the original in the possession of Thomas Windus, Esq





Faithful though at Liberty.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage and Birth of Stothard—Sent to nurse at Acomb—The old store-room and its attraction—Brought to London; placed at school—His father dies—Apprenticed to a pattern draughtsman—Designs from Homer and Spenser—His master dies—He continues with the widow—Makes sketches for her—Two gentlemen call on her—Results of the meeting—His early friends—Apprenticeship expires—Employed on the *Novelist's Magazine*—Exhibits his first picture—Becomes a student in Maiden Lane—His love of literature—Rambles in North Wales—Sketches from nature—Boating excursion—Falls in love—Marries—Alderman Boydell—Goes to a Mansion House Ball—Elected an Associate of the Royal Academy—His progress and works.



Initial letter (These presents) for the Policies of the Amicable Insurance Company, 1799.

HE father of Thomas Stothard was a native of Stutton, near Tadcaster, in Yorkshire; and though of an old and good family, so much reduced in circumstances, that (like the father of Sir Thomas Lawrence) he followed no higher calling than keeper of an inn. His wife, whose maiden name, I believe, was Reynolds, was a native of Shrewsbury; highly respectable both in her family and connexions. In 1750, they removed to London; where, during the few years that the elder Stothard lived, he carried on his business in Long Acre, with considerable success;

so that at his death he was enabled to leave some provision for his family.

His only child, Thomas, was born in London on the 17th of August, 1755.* In a biographical sketch where, like the present, the subject of it is more endowed by nature than distinguished by birth, it is often attempted (though not always very satisfactorily) to raise him by a reference to the dignity of his ancestors. In this instance, however, there is no need to have recourse either to fancy or tradition, in order to bring our artist within the pale of gentle blood and honourable lineage, as the following facts will attest.

On a failure of heirs male, in a not very distant branch, Thomas Stothard stood as the heir-at-law to an old family mansion and a large landed property, I believe, in Gloucestershire. Many years ago that failure took place, and he was advised to assert his claims, and take the usual legal measures in such a case. But he not only felt a great repugnance to disturb the tranquillity of his own mind,

* A doubt existed respecting the birth-place of Stothard; as some of his family believed it was Acomb, near York: the question has been set at rest by Mr. Peter Cunningham, who took the trouble to search the registers of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, the parish in which the greater part of Long Acre lies. There he found the entry of Stothard's birth and baptism. With a copy of this, he had the kindness to send me some few interesting memoranda concerning the childhood of Stothard, which his father, the late Mr. Allan Cunningham, made on the 6th of July 1830, being the day he received such information from Stothard himself.

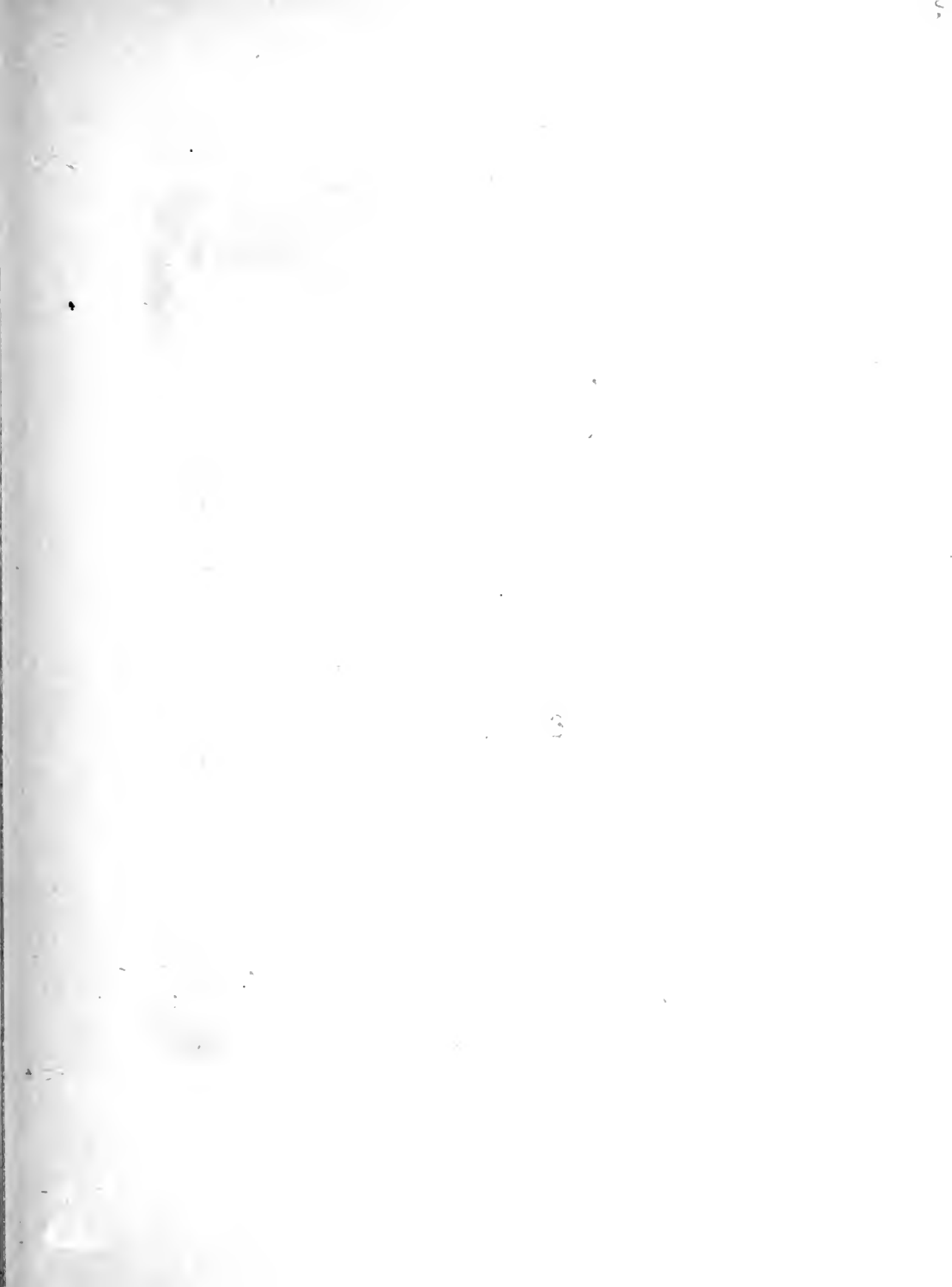
In the British Museum two documents

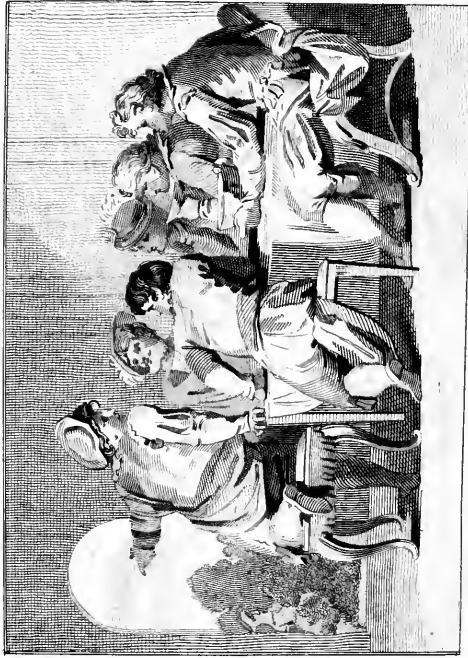
are preserved respecting him; one of them is nothing more than a slip of paper, on which he wrote a few particulars of his early life, at the request of the late Mr. Balmanno, in 1829, and in which, from failure of memory at so advanced an age, (being then in his seventy-sixth year) he made some slight errors and omissions. The other document is a short account of him that appeared in some magazine several years ago, to a copy of which Stothard annexed corrections and additions on the margin; in the latter were a few particulars not stated by him to Mr. Allan Cunningham; and also a few discrepancies, but not of so material a nature as to require special notice.



Stothard del.

Heath sculp.





U. 1848
1848

and the delightful indulgence of his imagination at the ease, with the turmoil and hazard and vexatious delays of a lawsuit, but a generous motive also prevailed with him ; as, at the time he was so much urged to proceed in the affair, he remarked, with the accustomed simplicity of his character, “ that he should not like to disturb with law the three maiden ladies who had the property in possession.” Burke would not have said that a spirit of chivalry was dead in England, could he have heard this anecdote of Stothard. To return from this digression.

Thomas being a delicate child, his father, anxious about his health, sent him, when five years old, to his uncle at York, who placed him “ under the care of an old lady, a good woman and a staunch presbyterian.” She lived in the little village of Acomb, near that city. “ There,” said Stothard, “ I grew stronger. She had two sons in the Temple, London, who sent her a present of some of the heads of Houbraken, framed and glazed ; likewise an engraving of the blind Belifarius, by Strange ; and some religious pictures from the unrivalled graver of the same artist. I looked often and earnestly at those productions ; for the old lady admitted me freely into her room, and seemed pleased with my admiration of them. I gazed till a love of Art grew within me, and a desire to imitate what was on her walls. I got bits of paper and pencils, and made many attempts. I could see that my hand was improving, and I had sketched some things not amiss, when, at eight years old, I was removed to Stutton, the birth-place of my father. Before this, I should have mentioned that my father, pleased with my attempts, had sent me boxes of colours, which I knew so little how to use, that I applied to a house-painter for some mixed paint, which he gave me in an oyster-shell, and the first man I painted was in black.

I had no examples ; you know how necessary they are ; Literature may be taught by words, Art must come through signs." Such was the account given by this eminent man concerning his childhood, to Mr. Allan Cunningham, in 1830. The following circumstances respecting an old picture which also made a strong impression on Stothard's infant mind, whilst at Acomb, were communicated to me by his son Alfred, who assured me that he received them from his father's own lips. They probably occurred at an earlier period than that of the present of the engravings to the old lady, which he attempted to "imitate," or copy.

It appears that Stothard's nurse at Acomb was a widow, named Stainburn,* who lived in an antiquated farm-house, and kept a day-school to aid her small means.

From the earliest period of his childhood, Thomas was of so quiet and docile a spirit, that the good widow at Acomb delighted in showing him any little kindness in her power, which, however, was but limited. It principally consisted in granting one of two very opposite indulgences ; that of affording him, occasionally, the company of a little boy of his own age, who, like himself, was meek and gentle in disposition, and to whom he was much attached ; or, an admission to an old store-room in the house, with a certain portion of the contents of which his mind associated its earliest impressions ; and this, it is not improbable, led to the first dawn or manifestation of his extraordinary genius. When his good-natured nurse gave little Tommy the choice of one of the

* Her name is stated by Stothard in his marginal notes in the old magazine. May not his recollections of the good widow of Acomb, and her day-school of little rustics, have been depicted in one of his very early and beautiful designs (which was engraved) from Shenstone's Schoolmistress ?



4



Small No. 12

A matron old, whom we Schoonmistress name,
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame.

74 237

above-named enjoyments, he would generally give the preference to the store-room.

And what was the attraction it possessed for one of his tender years? Simply this; there hung in it an old picture, opposite to



The Schoolmistress an illustration of Sheustene's poem.

which stood a small low stool; seated on this, the child would remain for hours together in solitude, contemplating something which laid hold of the spirit within him: as his insatiable eye passed from one point to another of the old painting with unwearied

delight ; and there would he sit until the door opened, and his nurse called him to supper and to bed.

In after life it is somewhat singular, that though Stothard dwelt much on this incident of his early days, he had no recollection of the master, nor even of the subject of the picture, which had constituted the charm of his childhood. But the impression it made on his young mind proved indelible ; and its character, in point of art, was never forgotten.

When eight years old, Thomas being still delicate in constitution, was again removed to the care of two kind aunts, who were very fond of him, at Stutton ; and was daily sent to school at Tadcaster. When he was in his thirteenth year, his father visited his native place ; and on his return to London, took his son with him, and placed him at a genteel boarding school, at Ilford in Essex, where they professed to teach all the languages and accomplishments ; there he was half-starved ; and there, he used to say, he learned to dance of the father of that wonder of pantomimic action—Grimaldi. Thomas had not been more than a year at Ilford, before his father died. The latter for some time had been in a precarious state of health, but, being fond of angling, he went, rather imprudently perhaps, on a fishing excursion to Colnbrook. He caught cold whilst engaged at that sport ; and returning to the village, was seized with so sudden and violent an illness, that in two or three days he was a corpse. He was buried in the neighbouring church-yard of Langley in 1770, as the stone on his grave still attests. He left some provision for his widow, and twelve hundred pounds in the funds for his son. On the loss of his father, the boy was taken from school, and lived at home with his mother, who, in order to be near an aged aunt, took up her residence at Stepney Green.





Thomas having displayed, before the death of his father, such a decided fondness for drawing, his mother thought it would be best to place him in some way of life where it would be required. In this determination, she evinced so much sense and observation, that I doubt not she was a woman of more than ordinary good understanding. She consulted with her friends, and as brocaded dresses were then much in fashion, at fifteen years of age Thomas was apprenticed to a draftsman of patterns for such silks. His master's residence was in Spital Square, the term of the apprenticeship seven years.

It was not till about two years before the expiration of his indentures, that flowered silks lost their vogue, when the business of drawing for them became slack and unprofitable, and Thomas, consequently, had less to do; yet, from the first, every leisure moment he could find, he devoted to the improvement of his mind and his fancy in his own way. His master, observing that the lad spent his hours of an evening in study, not in drawing from the patterns, but in making designs, principally from Homer's *Iliad* and Spenser's *Faery Queen*, indulged him by allowing him to paint in oil from these compositions. In his sketches he delighted in battle-pieces, slightly washing them in with Indian ink, in order to give them some degree of effect; these were mostly made on the leaves of an old account-book. Some of these early designs are still in the possession of his son Alfred, who tells me that they indicate a taste and style formed in the school of Mortimer, a painter of much imagination, who was considered the *Salvator* of his day.

The master, who, to the honour of his memory be it spoken, thus saw and encouraged these dawning efforts of genius, died

before Stothard was out of his time. Early difficulties seemed to open upon him, for the widow decided on carrying on the business at a period when there was a very uncertain prospect of success. Her youthful apprentice did his best to serve her, and was as remarkable for the steadiness of his conduct and the sweetness of his disposition, as when he won the heart of the nurse of his infancy to open to him the treasures of the store-room. After the work of the day was done, it was still his custom to read for awhile Homer, or Spenser, or any good book that he could procure, and then to indulge in sketching designs that were the offspring of his own imagination, and frequently illustrative of what he had just read. By an overruling Providence, these youthful flights of fancy were made the first step to his remarkable career, and his future eminence.

He ever spoke of his mistress in terms of grateful esteem, and his good conduct had secured for him her most sincere regard. Whilst he was thus engaged in sketching of an evening, she would often watch his hand, and asked him to give her one or two of his drawings, that she might place them for an ornament over her mantel-piece, in the best parlour. Her wish was granted, and the sketches were hung up.

Not long after, two gentlemen called at her house: one of them to give her a commission in the way of business; and, whilst he was talking to her, the other gentleman amused himself with examining the sketches over the mantel-piece. His attention being completely absorbed by them, his friend came up and looked also. On hearing the astonishment expressed by the former at their style and execution, the mistress of the house felt such a pride in her youthful apprentice, that she exclaimed, "Sir, you are admiring



Drawn by T. Stothard, R.A.

Engraved by J. Stalker.

GULLIVERS TRAVELS.

LONDON;
Printed for Hector McLean.
1823.

my lad's work. That is the way in which he occupies himself every evening." "Does he so?" replied the stranger; "pray let me see him."

Thomas was then introduced, and the person who had so admired his designs over the chimney-piece drew from his pocket a book. This he placed in the hands of the youth, (who stood before him not a little abashed by hearing his own commendations) and begged him to read it carefully; and when he met with a subject which struck his fancy, to make a design for it in Indian ink. He then took his leave, saying that he would call again at the end of a week. The book (a novel) was read, and instead of one, *three* designs were executed and ready for the gentleman; who, true to his time and word, called again. The drawings were examined and approved; half-a-guinea was put into his hand; and Stothard's future lot was decided.

The stranger was no other than the well-known Mr. Harrifon, the editor (and I believe proprietor) of the *Novelist's Magazine*; published many years ago, and long before that series, edited by Mrs. Barbauld, with a critique by herself appended to each work.

When Stothard was about twenty years old, he formed an intimacy with Samuel Shelly, who, some years after, became celebrated as a miniature painter. Also with an artist of the same class, Mr. Darcey.* Another of his friends was a Mr. Scarlett, who drew very beautifully, and subsequently became a clerk in the Bank of England. These young men were of great assistance to

* Mr. Darcey was the father of the late General Darcey, of the Royal Engineers, who, many years ago, accompanied the embassy to Persia, and brought home with

him a most beautiful series of his own drawings, illustrative of the Court and the people of that remote country.

each other in the several branches of art they pursued. Whatever was taken in hand, or if any new attempt was made to facilitate a progress in study, by any one of their number ; it was imparted to the others and became a subject of emulation and discussion among them. For a time, at least, their studies might almost be said to be in common.

At the expiration of his apprenticeship, Stothard's mother had apartments at Bethnal Green, where he resided with her ; to use his own words, " studious of the art of painting, and adding a little to my narrow income, by now and then painting some small family portraits amongst my acquaintances." Whilst he lived with his mother, they visited Shrewsbury together, the place of her birth ; and thence made an excursion into North Wales for ten days.



Peter Wilkins Youwarka towing the Boat. From the Novelist's Magazine, published 1783.

Stothard now bade adieu to all thoughts of making drawings for bro-

cadeed silks. In 1778 he paid a visit to his friend Darcey, then living at Portsmouth ; and beginning his career, as an artist, successfully in that place. It is not improbable that this visit might





Alfred & Ethelwitia.

have confirmed him in a previously half-formed resolution to do as Darcey did, and adopt art as a profession. At all events, on his return to town, he no longer continued to reside with his mother, but, in company with his friend Shelly, took lodgings in the Strand. It seems that at this period he managed to subsist on the interest of his twelve hundred pounds, vested for him by his father in the funds, with, as he stated, such additions as he could now and then gain by painting portraits.

Although there can be no question that the spark of encouragement first struck out by Harrison kindled the flame of emulation in the breast of young Stothard, which gave expansion to a boundless power of imagination, and led the way to his eventually becoming the greatest historical painter this country ever produced, yet it does not appear that he was regularly employed on the *Novelist's Magazine* till July, 1780; but, from that period to 1783, he was much engaged in the illustration of books. Another important consequence attendant on his connexion with Harrison, was that of introducing beautiful illustrations as an accompaniment to the popular literature of England; and in this respect he was destined to become the father of the British school. The designs made by this eminent man for these publications, the early volumes of which have become exceedingly scarce, are still the admiration, not only of the learned in Art, but of every one having a heart alive to Nature, and capable, even in a remote degree, of estimating the highest order of poetic composition. It will surprise modern collectors, who now give almost any price that may be demanded for these early drawings, to learn how little he received for them. Stothard states, in some old memoranda of accounts found in his own handwriting, that he made one

hundred and forty-eight designs for the *Novelist's Magazine*, at one guinea each ;* that for twenty-six designs for the *Poetical Magazine* he had the same rate of payment ; that for twenty theatrical frontispieces (and these were always portraits of the chief actors and actresses of the day) he received seven shillings each ; and that for every separate border or vignette his remuneration was six shillings !

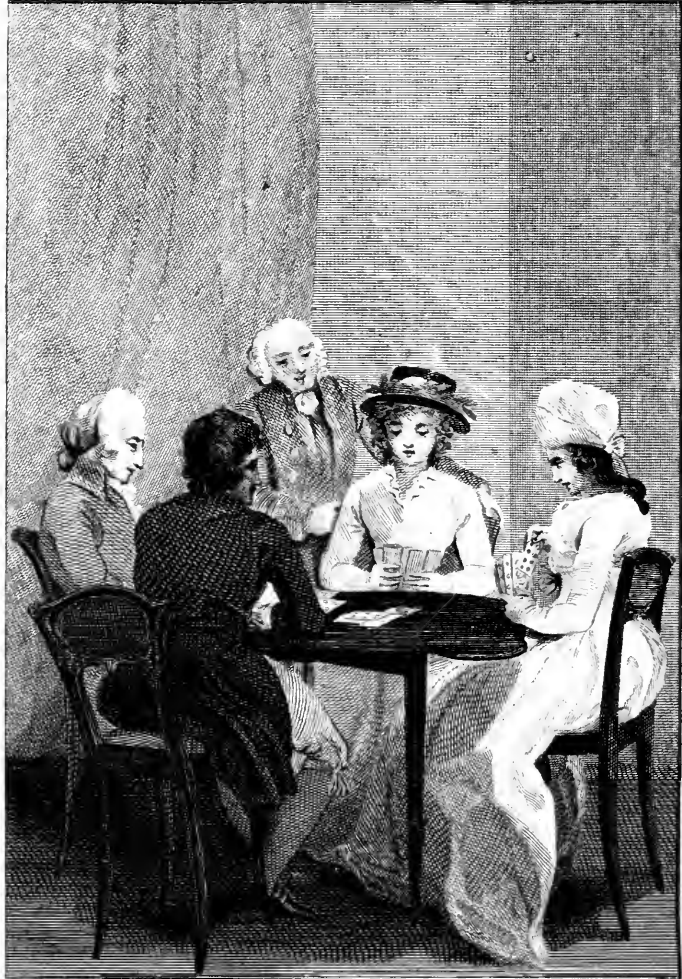


Mrs. Jordan in the character of
Priscilla Tomboy.

It is uncertain whether it was before or after he lived with Shelly, that he exhibited his first picture (*A Holy Family*) at the Society of Artists ; but I have seen it stated by himself, that soon after he did so, he was admitted as a student at Maiden Lane ; where (before the establishment of the Royal Academy at Somerset House) the artists held their meetings, and the young men drew from the living model and from the antique. Moser (the father of the beautiful flower-painter, afterwards Mrs. Lloyd) and Wilson, the landscape-painter, were then the librarians of this rising institution.

Mr. Leslie the Royal Academician, who was on terms of intimate acquaintance with Stothard, and highly estimated both his genius and his moral worth, says, concerning this period of our artist's career, that in early life he was frequently at the house of the President, Sir Joshua Reynolds, as indeed were any of the students of the Academy

* These exquisite productions are now in the collection of Mr. Windus, of Tottenham Green.



Rehner del.

Coak sculp

CASSINO.

who were desirous of benefitting by his advice and conversation, for Sir Joshua kindly allowed young artists to call on him early in the morning before he had himself commenced painting. He criticised their works; and, as Mr. Oliver, who was at that time a student, told Mr. Leslie, Sir Joshua's manner was, as Goldsmith described



The Exhibition-room of the Royal Academy in 1780

it, "gentle, complying, and bland." Stothard participated in these great advantages, and likewise, when a student, had the benefit of occasionally receiving advice from Wilson.

Stothard's method of study was peculiarly his own; he adopted

not the practice so general with the students, to sit down and draw from a single figure for six or eight weeks. He would place himself opposite to it, and in a small sketch-book would make a careful outline in pen and ink, about five inches in height. He said that he had recourse to this method, because it obliged him well to consider the lines and the proportions before they were drawn, and that thus they became strongly impressed upon the memory. He disapproved the practice of rubbing out, and maintained that an eye and a hand well trained in making pen and ink outlines would be characterized by truth, carefulness, and a good flow of line; in short, would be masterly.

Having in less than an hour's time thus taken one view of the figure before him, he would change his position so as to command a different view of it; and then, being especially careful to mark the change of contour in his subject, he would begin another sketch, and thus continue to work till he produced seven or eight drawings of the same figure. He frequently remarked, that any one who adopted this method of study would, after a little practice, be surprised by the knowledge he had attained. At the same time, he would by no means have the student neglect light and shade, and rounding well the figure: but truth of outline, in its varied forms, was most essential; and, after having acquired it, he might pass with safety to the living model, as the imperfections of nature would be immediately discovered and corrected by the knowledge previously gained.

Stothard was ever a close observer of nature; but it was nature in action that he most studied and admired; and thought that, however good might be the design or the conception of a picture, (frequently displayed with freedom in the original sketch,) it was





Johny to Striker to

very good

often spoiled by presenting, in the figures which composed it, all the stiffness of the lay figure, and all the rigidity and fixed attitude of the living model, from which the artist worked. He would remark, that action was momentary,—it could not be fixed; to be well expressed, it must be caught at once by the mind. It is generally known that he never painted from a model. Even at Burleigh House, where his figures, on the grand staircase, are nearly eight feet in height, not one in any of the groups was painted from a model; and these rank amongst the finest and noblest productions of his pencil.*

It must also be stated, that, at an early period, he studied much Albert Durer, in whose works he delighted; more especially in his draperies.

From a very early age, Stothard was an assiduous student. As we have seen, he had received little or no instruction in the ordinary branches of knowledge; for his short schooling at Ilford, where, under a hard master, the boys were flogged to make them hold their tongues, lest they should prate to their friends at home of the starvation they suffered at school, could not be considered as any education at all. But his want of regular and proper teaching does but raise him the more in our estimation, when we consider through what impediments he broke, and made his own way to

* An eminent artist now living, when painting a large historical picture, requested Mr. Alfred Stothard to beg his father to come and give his opinion of its merits. He expressed a wish that he should come whilst the living model was standing; observing, that he knew artists preferred this method when they were about to make

remarks on a work in hand. The gentleman who made this request, on being informed that the painter whose criticism he was desirous to obtain, never used a model, and disapproved the practice, expressed his astonishment; exclaiming, "Then he stands alone; I can now understand how it is all Stothard's works are so graceful."

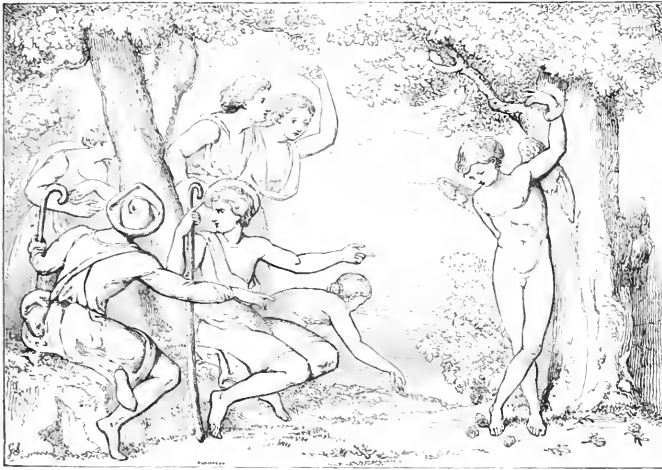
honourable distinction. Perhaps after all it is not so much to be regretted, that a mind such as his was left to educate itself; and he never lost any opportunity of improvement in that course which was of his own choosing. He read all the standard authors, in poetry or prose, that he could procure, in his own language; and though his mind was more intent on the subject than the words, and he had not perhaps a quick eye or ear for them, (for he sometimes spelt carelessly; and correct orthography, in his day, was not thought to be so necessary as in our own,) yet was he fond of writing.* From an early period, almost to the close of his life, he copied into little books,—poems, anecdotes from history, letters from friends, or anything that struck him; and wherever he went, generally kept a brief journal of his excursion or his tour. I have seen one little book entirely filled by the copies he made of letters from his son Charles; another with a whole series written by some young man to his father, a friend of his, during a journey abroad. Another small MS. volume was filled by references to Greek, Roman, and English history; and a vast collection of facts and dates, that he had gleaned from various biographical dictionaries and other sources, still in the possession of his son, was formed into a manuscript book, as a foundation for a dictionary which he once proposed himself to write of the Lives of the Painters. It was evident in all this how much he delighted in study; indeed nothing seemed to escape him that offered a subject worthy of investigation to his most enquiring mind; and all was treasured that became interesting to him from the love of knowledge or from motives of affection.

* Even Pope frequently spelt incorrectly; spelling the same word two or three different ways in his letters.





He was, I have been assured, so economical at the outset of life that he contrived to live very respectably on what he termed his "narrow means," and yet he not unfrequently assisted a friend, even when his own purse was at a very low ebb; and was never in debt. Though so delicate in childhood, his parents (who were sensible as well as most respectable people) wisely kept him in the fine bracing air of Yorkshire during his infant years, a precaution which proved eventually of the utmost advantage to him; it



Watson's Songs "Cupid Chained" Published 1753.

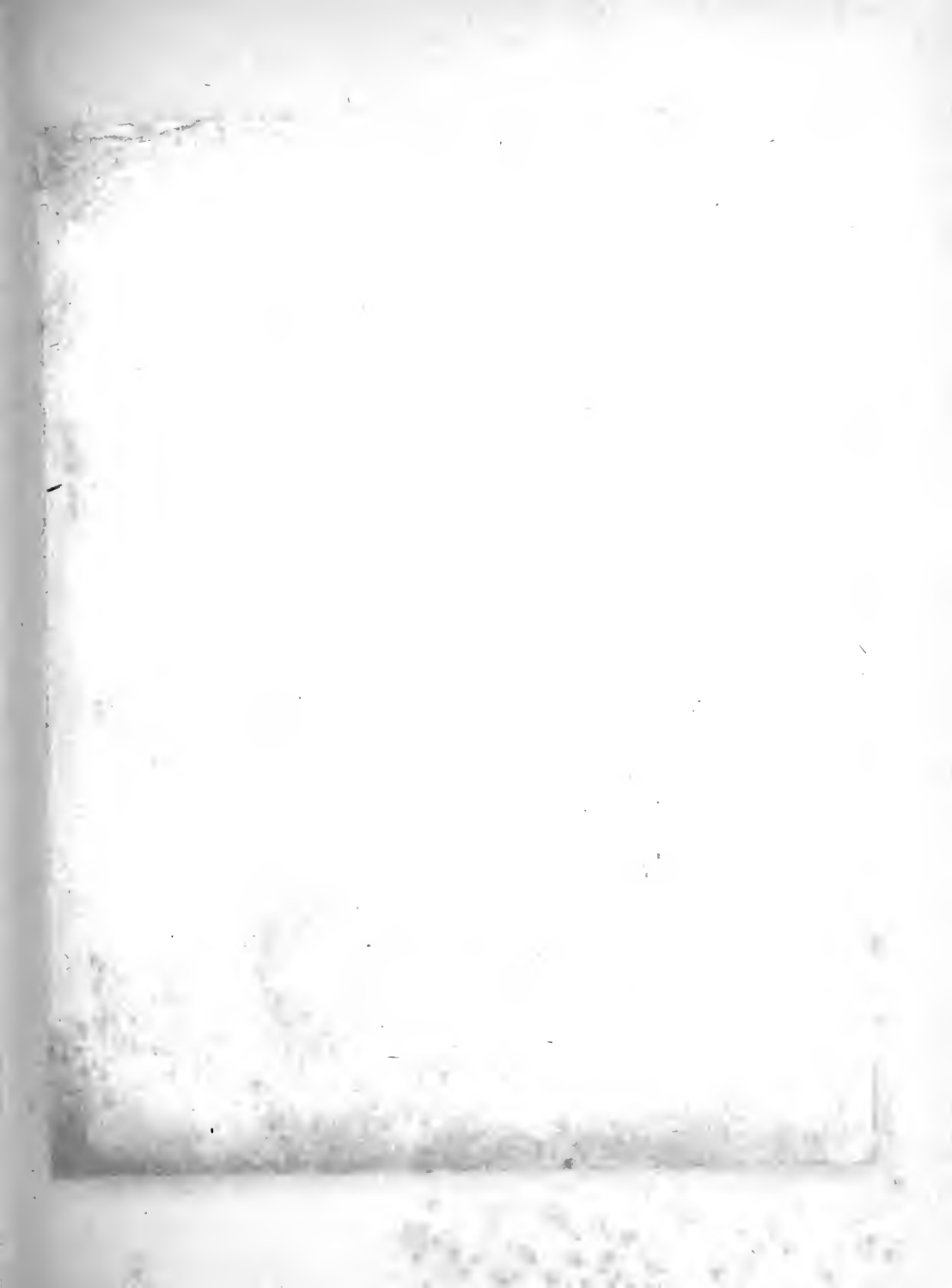
gave health and strength to an originally weak constitution; and his naturally placid, patient, and equal temper, with the blessing of having a constant pursuit, was altogether friendly not only to his mental vigour, but to the longevity he enjoyed.

He was, from a boy, fond of exercise; and, on the whole, took a good deal. But this very "medicine" (for so he called it)

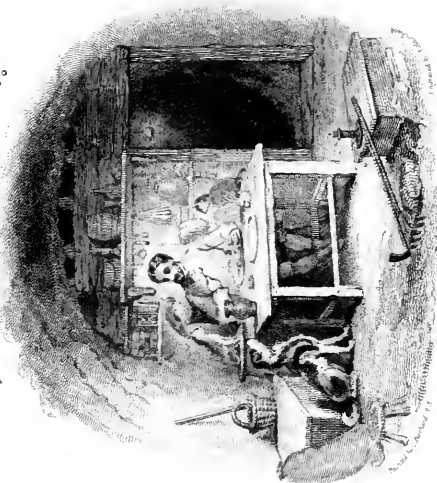
he turned to account in his pursuits. Intent on the study of nature, he could not even take a walk, but living and furrounding objects would arrest his eye, engage his mind, and supply food for memory and reflection. Whilst yet but a very young man, as soon as the Academy closed, he would make his way into Worcester-shire ; and there purchasing a sure-footed Welsh pony, would set off on a tour in North Wales. The pony was retained until he came back to the Borders, where it was sold ere he once more returned to London.

In these excursions Stothard delighted to roam through the wildest and grandest scenery that mountain and valley, stream and cataract, could present. He drew, all the way he went, everything which most struck his fancy, making his sketches with great care ; and pausing amid rocks, woods, and ravines, such as a Salvator would have delighted to pourtray. Carmarthen and Conway Castles, Bangor, and other celebrated places, were all visited and pictured with that fine feeling for nature, and truth of representation, for which he was so remarkable in all he did throughout life. On the sketches thus made, and recollections thus acquired, at a more mature age, he founded those most beautiful backgrounds, introduced in his illustrations of *Robinson Crusoe*, his *Fête Champêtre*, the *Decameron*, and other subjects of that class.

These early sketches were retained by him for many years with great interest ; they were kept apart from others in a portfolio, in his painting-room. And though it will be digressing, I cannot resist here pausing a moment to tell the reader their fate. One winter's morning (when Stothard lived in Newman Street) he came rather unexpectedly into his room, when he found an Irish housemaid engaged in lighting his fire with the contents of



THE LIFE AND
ADVENTURES
OF
ROBINSON CRUSOE.



Then we saw the King's Island as well as the
strange of the sea water.

LONDON:
Published by W. Strachan, Bookseller & Co.
& Routledge & Co. Stationers.
1808.

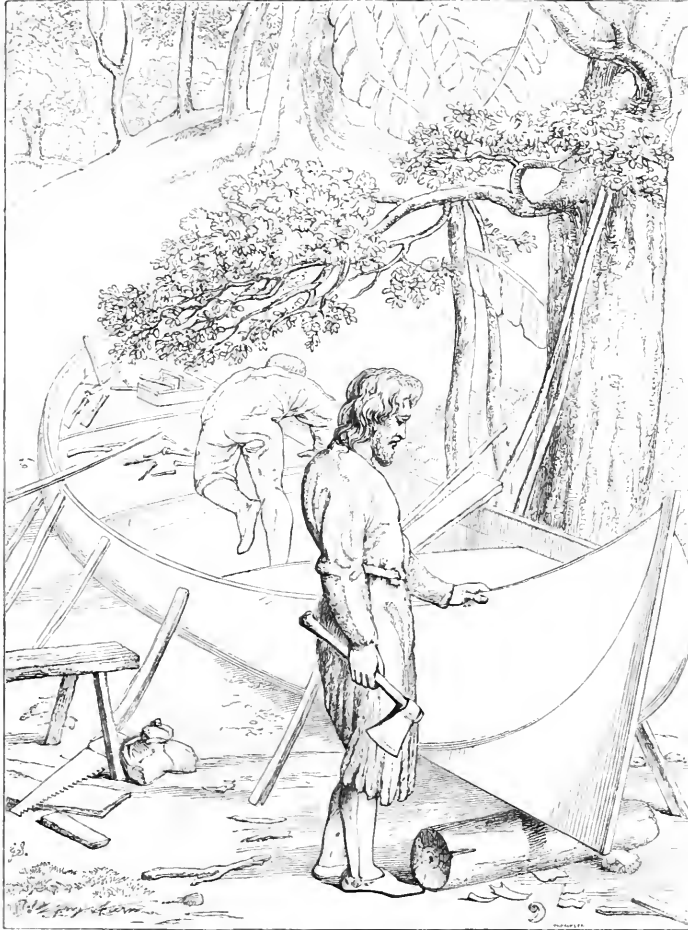


I had one labour to make me a canoe,
which at last I finished.

Printed by T. Cadell, Strand, London. Printed by W. Strachan, Bookseller & Co. Stationers, Fleet Street, London.

Published by W. Strachan, Bookseller & Co. Stationers, Fleet Street, London.

his portfolio of North Wales! His vexation and surprize may well be conceived; he could not help expressing them, but the



Robinson Crusoe and Friday making a boat. Engraved by Medland in 1790.

damfel very civily excused herself by telling him, she thought they were waste papers. “Woman!” exclaimed Stothard, “you are

the greatest incendiary I ever knew in all my life; you have burnt Conway and Carmarthen Castles, and the whole town of Bangor, in this one morning's work." From that time forth the painting-room door was kept locked—and the key in its master's pocket; and never was a servant allowed to enter its precincts for the purpose of sweeping, &c., without being watched, and at very distant periods; and truly on this account, the apartment often wore a very dim and dusty aspect. To return to the subject.

In the early times of which I am now speaking, Stothard would occasionally spend a few days with his friends in sailing up the Medway, landing and sketching as they pleased. In one of these excursions he was accompanied by his old friend Mr. Ogleby,

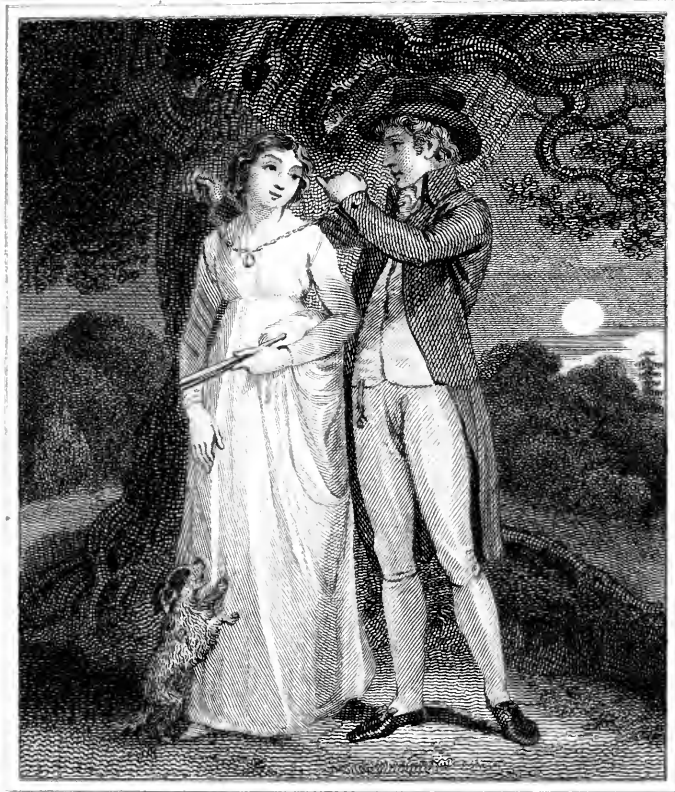


Stothard and friends prisoners during a boating excursion at Upnor Castle on the Medway, from an etching by himself

and Blake, that amiable, eccentric, and greatly gifted artist, who produced so many works indicative of a high order of genius, and sometimes no less of an unsound mind. Whilst the



HENRY & MARY.



No fine flowing language, I here interweave,
The device is appropriate and true,
This breast is too honest, my fair, to deceive,
And the rom simply says, 'I love you'.

trio were one day engaged with the pencil on shore, they were suddenly surpris'd by the appearance of some soldiers, who very unceremoniously made them prisoners, under the suspicion of their being spies for the French government; as this country was then at war with France. In vain did they plead that they were only there sketching for their own amusement; it was insisted upon that they could be doing nothing less than surveying for purposes inimical to the safety of Old England. Their provisions were brought on shore, and a tent was formed for them of their sails, suspended over the boat-hook and oars, placed as uprights in the ground. There were they detained, with a sentinel placed over them, until intelligence could be received from certain members of the Royal Academy, to whom they appealed, to certify they were really peaceable subjects of his Majesty King George, and not spies for France.

Stothard made a very spirited pen and ink drawing of this scene, whilst under detention. On their liberation, they spent a merry hour with the commanding officer, to whom the artist remarked, that an opportunity had been given him for making a sketch he had not anticipated; whilst Ogleby declared that once being taken prisoner was quite enough for him; he would go out no more on such perilous expeditions.*

It was not possible that a young man of Stothard's poetic order of mind could long be insensible to the fascinations of youth and beauty. He fell in love with a Miss Watkins, a lady who was

* In the British Museum, amongst the folios containing Stothard's works in the Print Room, an etching from this drawing may be seen, called *A Boating Excursion*. The etching is there stated to be by Blake; but Alfred Stothard says it was by his father. The drawing was sold at Christie's sale, and is now in the possession of Mr. William Sharpe, of Highbury.

handsome and agreeable; and like her brother, the Captain, possessed a good deal of shrewd observation, natural humour, and vivacity. She was an Anabaptist. Her father, a man of good fortune, was so infatuated by a fondness for all sorts of dissenting ministers, that he opened his house rather too liberally, and spent his money rather too freely, on gentlemen of that description; some of whom were not the sincerest or best of their kind. He had not the happiness to be acquainted with men so excellent as Wesley and Robert Hall.

Stothard, it seems, did not immediately win the object of his choice. But the affections of such a heart as his were incapable of change. For some time he patiently preferred his suit, and at length gained the hand of the fair Rebecca. But, though his love was true and deep, it was always more or less accompanied with that serenity which formed a marked feature in his character. After he had led his beloved to the altar, not to lose an hour from his studies, even on his wedding-day, he conducted home his bride, and then very quietly walked down to the Academy, to draw from the antique till three o'clock, the hour at which it then closed. There he sat, by the side of a fellow-student named Scott, with whom he was intimate, and, after drawing the usual time, at length said to his friend, "I am now going home to meet a family party. Do come and dine with me, for I have this day taken to myself a wife."

His marriage was productive of many joys and many sorrows. Eleven children were the fruit of it; only six of them lived beyond infancy; and of the truly melancholy fate of two of those who survived to riper years, I shall have to speak in due time and place. Here it will suffice to say, that so increasing a family obliged him constantly to labour, and often to accept commissions



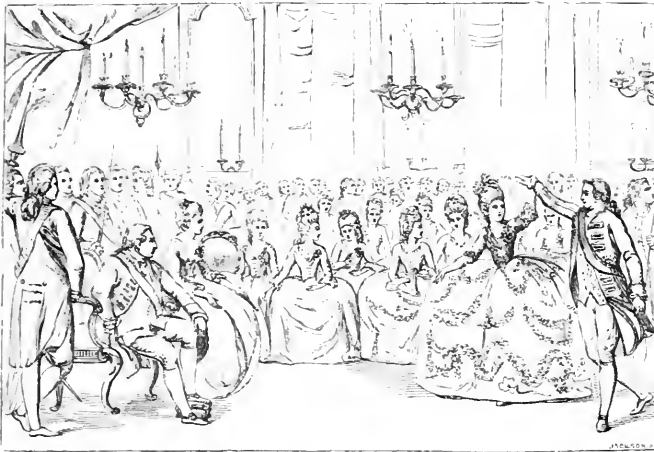
DUTCHESS of GLOUCESTER.

22



the champions thus encountering.

that were too trifling, and of too minute an order, for a painter of his master mind and hand: for instance, such commissions as designing for pocket-books, ladies' fashions, sketches of court balls, and amusements, royal huntings, and for ordinary magazines and play-books. But, so great was Stothard's love of art and the



A View of the King's Ball at St James's, on the King's Birthday, June 4, 1780.

simplicity of his character, that he made his designs for these with the same care, and threw into them the same exquisite grace, which he bestowed on the highest order of his works. He felt the truth of that admirable remark, I believe by Johnson, "that what is worth doing at all, is worth doing well." Yet, if we consider how much below his merit were some of the tasks in which, at this period, he engaged, it is ever to be lamented that good King George the Third (who so munificently patronised West, fancying he was encouraging the greatest living artist) had not bestowed his royal countenance and bounty on Stothard; as, by giving him

commissions, he would have given him independence, and enabled him to employ, on a scale and on subjects worthy of his genius, those astonishing powers with which he was endowed.

A circumstance also which might have contributed to injure him in the early part of his career, was that an amateur landscape painter, Sir George Beaumont, whose rank and fortune gave more authority to his opinions, than, from his own talents, they were entitled to claim, never could understand nor acknowledge the genius of Stothard. And



Pilgrim's Progress: The Alarm. Engraved 1788. Christian, alarmed at having read that the city in which he lived was threatened with destruction, expresses his great anxiety to his Wife and Children.

as Sir George's opinions very much set the fashion of his day in art, as to who was, or was not, to be admired, in all probability Stothard suffered by soaring above his comprehension, and therefore being deprived of his praise.



Howard del.

Howe sculp.

J. York

I know not when he first became acquainted with Alderman Boydell; by whom he was employed for those beautiful illustrations of Shakespeare, of which more will be said hereafter; but he used to relate a circumstance respecting the attention he received from him, that was not a little amusing, and, as it is connected with his pursuits, it shall here find a place.

At the time Boydell became Lord Mayor of London, our artist was residing in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. He was one day greatly surprised, by seeing the private carriage of his lordship drive up to the door empty. A note was delivered informing him that my Lord Mayor was about to give that evening (April 12th, 1791) a ball and entertainment at the Mansion House; and so earnestly desired to have the pleasure of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Stothard's company, that he had sent his own carriage for them. Accordingly they went, and were most kindly and graciously received. Everything was grand and splendid. But although Stothard had in former days learnt to dance of Grimaldi's father, he retained no taste for the amusement in his own person. Notwithstanding all the splendour of a civic ball and banquet, the evening would have been a very dull one to a grave and sedate man like himself, had he not brought with him, what he averred no artist should ever be without—his sketch-book; and he soon found employment for his pencil.

Brooke Watson was present, the lion of the evening; and as people came to see and to wonder at him, very probably he determined that they should have something to wonder at; for he danced away with his wooden leg all the evening, to the admiration and amazement of the company; unconscious that this singular display of one-legged agility afforded a subject for

Stothard's sketch-book; and to the studies of that night, may in all probability be traced those worthy citizens of "Cheape," who are so characteristically introduced in his celebrated picture of the Canterbury Pilgrims.*

In 1792, he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy; and that year he exhibited his beautiful picture of Confirmation.†

He had now wholly emancipated himself from the school of Mortimer; and the very spirit of Raphael (whose compositions he had so deeply studied) seemed to live and breathe again in the works of Stothard. To name only a few of them will be sufficient to show what were his labours at this period, how rapid had been his progress, and how great the productions of his imagination and his pencil.

His designs for Milton's Paradise Lost (than which nothing was ever more purely conceived or beautifully executed) were engraved by Bartolozzi. His Ruth first beheld by Boaz whilst Gleaning; St. John Preaching in the Wilderness; Jacob's Dream; and The Angels appearing to the Shepherds, were all of the same date: the two last named will bear a comparison with the compositions of the great master of the sacred school, Raphael.

Soon after, Comus was also illustrated, and several striking events

* Brooke Watson lost his leg by being pursued by a shark whilst bathing: the monster snapped it off, at the very moment when some of his friends, who came to his rescue, were helping him into the boat. I do not know in what place the accident happened.

† I cannot resist here mentioning a little circumstance connected with this painting, which occurred at Christie's sale of Stothard's works after his death. I

was speaking to Sir Edwin Landseer, with great admiration, of one of Stothard's works, before which we were both standing, when he said, "But come here, and look at this." Sir Edwin then led me to the picture of Confirmation, and exclaimed, "Nothing in beauty or grace can go beyond that." This precious painting is now in the possession of the Rev. W. Russell, of Shepperton.

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in English history, such as the Marriage of Henry V. with Catherine of France; Richard I.'s Return from Palestine; that



Confirmation. Painted in 1792.

chivalrous King's meeting with Isaac Prince of Cyprus; six designs from Telemachus; the Dryads finding Narcissus, and various other works. The last ten cited were exhibited at the Royal Academy;

and great must have been the gratification of Sir Joshua Reynolds, when he saw works not unworthy the schools of Raphael and Parmegiano produced by one whom, but a few years before, he had singled out as the most promising of all the students in that Academy of which he was the head.



Six fashionable Head dresses for 1787.





THE SCENE AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
BY J. H. STIMPSON

CHAPTER II.

Stothard removes to Newman Street—Robbery of his plate—Elected an Academician—Illustrates the Pilgrim's Progress—The Sylph and the Butterfly—His fondness for Nature—Designs for plate—Studies in the school of Rubens—The Marquis of Exeter employs him to paint the great staircase at Burleigh—Engaged by Heath on Shakespeare—His son Charles sketches the effigies in the churches near Burleigh—Stothard's letter to the Marquis on the terms of his painting—Extracts from letters to his wife—His mother dies.

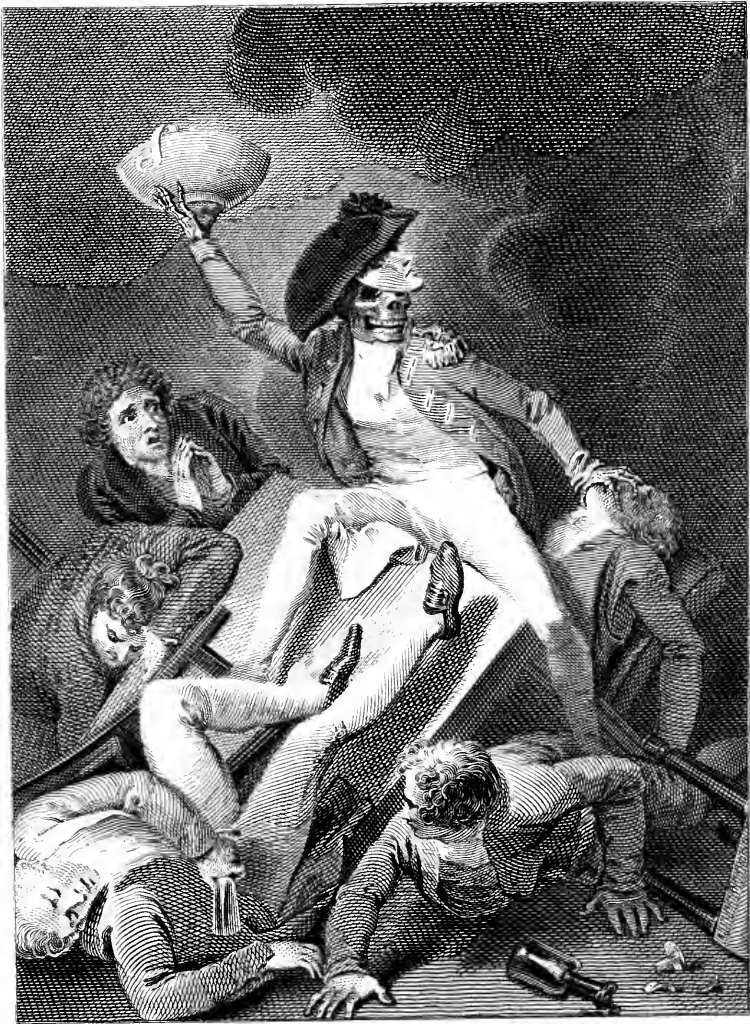
WHILE Stothard was thus busily engaged in works of so important a nature, his family was fast increasing. He had now three children, and, wanting more room for them, decided on removing to a larger and more convenient house. It happened that one (a freehold property, No. 28, in Newman Street,) was to be sold, with a considerable quantity of handsome furniture, especially that of the drawing-room, for the very moderate sum of one thousand pounds: the proprietor was about to live abroad, and felt anxious to get the house off his hands. Stothard at once decided on the purchase; and, in order to effect it, sold out of the funds nearly all the capital left him by his father. And now did he experience the benefit of early economy and prudence, in never having touched the money till the moment when it could be turned to such good account. On his removal, his widowed mother, upon whom years and decay were fast stealing, and to whom he had ever been a most dutiful son, formed one of his domestic circle, and continued to reside with him till her death.

Thus was he fairly established in *Artists' Street*; for, in a few

years, so was Newman Street designated by the neighbourhood in familiar discourse ; and well might it be so. West (the president of the Royal Academy) had lived there seventeen, and Bacon (the sculptor) eighteen years, before Stothard bought his house ; and, in a comparatively short period, Ruffell, Ward, Howard, Jackson (all Academicians), Dawe, and a host of other artists, to the number of about forty, all became residents in the same street.

Before I proceed with his professional career, I cannot refrain from pausing a moment, in order to give a striking instance of that calm and happy serenity of temper which, in this remarkable man, was seldom, if ever, disturbed, except by some trial that might truly be called great. The circumstance I am about to narrate occurred after his removal to Newman Street.

Stothard, though never rich, was the possessor of a quantity of valuable old family plate : I know not if it came to him on his father's side, or his mother's, or from both ; but, be this as it may, it was of family inheritance, and therefore doubly valuable. On some occasion (and he was at all times most hospitable) he gave a dinner to several of his friends and some of the Academicians ; and the plate was used. The next morning the whole of it was gone. The doors and windows seemed untouched ; the robbery, therefore, appeared unaccountable, as the servants in the house were believed to be most steady and respectable. The consternation of Mrs. Stothard, on discovering such a loss, as it well might be, was great. She communicated it to her husband with all a woman's fears and regrets for the disaster. But he bore the intelligence with the most perfect serenity ; and, as he then expressed himself, from that period was content to take his meals without silver.



————— he drops his mask,
Crowns out at full; they start, despair, expire.

London: Pub^d Jan^y 1802, by Verner & Hood, and the other Proprietors.

Page 28.

Many years after this transaction, a criminal in Newgate, whose sentence of death, for an extensive robbery, was changed into transportation for life, confessed to a clergyman, who attended him whilst he expected execution, that he had been concerned in the robbery of Stothard's plate. He acknowledged that he had been connected with the cook, who agreed to leave the drawing-room window unbarred on the night of the party, so that the fellow might get in and open the street-door to his associates. The plate was in a lower part of the house; it was carried off in a sack, and consigned to the melting-pot before the following morning.

The next memorable event in Stothard's life was, that, in 1794, he was elected a Royal Academician, when he gave to the Academy a picture of Charity; it being the custom with each artist who becomes a member of that honourable body, to present them with a painting for their council-room, there to remain as a memorial of the talent and attainments of the individual at the time of his election.

It was, I believe, soon after his becoming an Academician, that he designed those illustrations for the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which, as a series, have never been surpassed by his pencil. There is about them a grandeur, a devotional simplicity, combined with his accustomed purity and grace, admirably suited to the religious character of the book. As an instance of the sublime in art, Christian's conflict with Apollyon may be cited.

About this period he painted a picture which gave rise to a new and delightful combination in his studies of colour for his works; the circumstance which led to it, deserves not to be forgotten.* He

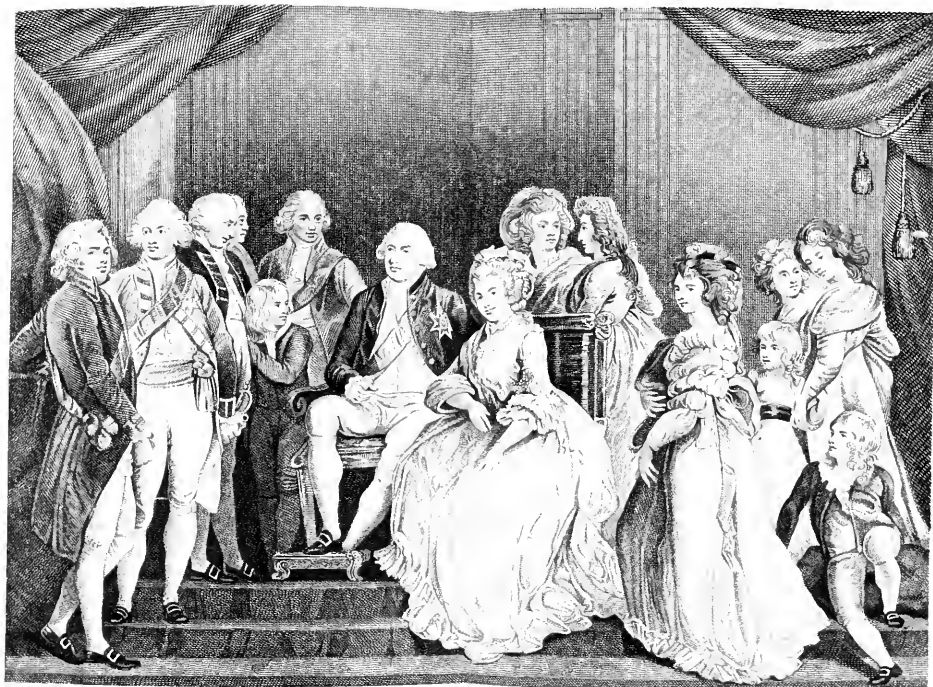
* Whilst alluding to Stothard's colouring, it may be useful to others here to state, that the peculiarly rich brown so often admired in his works, was a colour of his own invention, and was thus made by himself:—He procured the shank-bones

was beginning to paint the figure of a reclining fylph, when a difficulty arose in his own mind, how best to represent such a being of fancy. A friend, who was present, said, "Give the fylph a butterfly's wing, and there you have it." "That I will," exclaimed Stothard; "and to be correct, I will paint the wing from the butterfly itself." He immediately sallied forth, extended his walk to the fields some miles distant, and caught one of those beautiful insects: it was of the class called the peacock. Our artist brought it carefully home, and commenced sketching it, but not in the painting-room; and leaving it on the table, a servant (I know not if it were the Irish damsel) swept the pretty little creature away, before its portrait was finished.* On learning his loss, away went Stothard once more to the fields to seek another butterfly. But at this time one of the tortoise-shell tribe crossed his path, and was secured. He was astonished at the combination of colour that presented itself to him in this small but exquisite work of the Creator; and, from that moment, determined to enter on a new and delightful field—the study of the insect department of natural history. He became a hunter of butterflies; the more he caught, the greater beauty did he trace in their infinite variety: and he would often say, that no one knew what he owed to these insects; they had taught him the finest combinations in that difficult branch of Art, colouring.

Not, however, in butterflies only, but in everything, Stothard was an indefatigable student of nature. He went nowhere without

of the sheep, baked them well in an oven, and then ground them down to a fine powder, and used it as he would any other colour.

* This sketch of the butterfly, with one wing only finished, was sold amongst Stothard's drawings, after his death, at the sale at Christie's in 1834.



THE ROYAL FAMILY OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE YEAR 1787.

a sketch-book, and nothing struck his eye or his fancy but it was transferred to it. He recommended this practice to others, with the injunction, never to alter anything when absent from the object drawn: he said that, unless this rule was observed, all the spirit of the sketch would be lost. In his walks to Iwer (about eighteen miles from London), whither he often went, accompanied by his son Alfred, to visit his aged aunt, Mrs. Hales, after they had passed Acton, he would say, "Now let us leave the high road, and away to the fields and the hedges; we shall find there some beautiful plants, well worth seeking." No sooner had they done so, than the sketch-book and colour-box were brought forth from his pocket; and many a wild plant, with its delicate formation of leaf and flower, was carefully copied on the spot. This was done with a fine pen filled with the tints required; the springing of the tendrils from the stem, and every elegant bend and turn of the leaves, or the drooping of a bell, was observed and depicted with the utmost beauty.

When reminded by his son of the long way they had yet to go, and that they must absolutely proceed, or run the chance of being benighted, he would nevertheless linger to the last moment, and then close the book with regret. And when the walk was resumed, he sometimes stopped and exclaimed:—"Look, Alfred, observe that plant; what a study for an architect! Few architects can build churches and towers, or add pinnacles and ornaments with taste and skill: but let them come here—that plant with its little companion, and that with the large broad leaves in the background, would teach them a valuable lesson." And often was the sketch-book again brought forth to secure some recollection, however slight, of what had so struck him. He remarked, that of all studies, nature

formed the most inexhaustible and delightful, and that every artist should, in some way, make his art his recreation; for, let him sketch what he might, some time or other he would find it useful. Stothard was himself an example of the truth of this observation.

Commissioned by the house of Messrs. Rundell and Bridge, he made many magnificent designs for chased plate for the sovereign and chief nobility. In these his study of plants was apparent. The delicate bud, the tender leaf of the stems and clusters, were all employed as he had gleaned them in the field of nature. The spreading silver branches holding forth their lights to the assembled guests round the table of a royal banquet, the superb sword and scabbard, with its chased and jewelled hilt, presented to some British hero by the hand of the sovereign prince, were all in their appropriate character,—their beauty and their grace, emanations from the genius of Stothard, inexhaustible in its resources, and in all its imaginings still pure and elegant. Grace, indeed, was inherent in his mind; it pervaded not only all he did, but all he thought or imagined.

The beauty of Stothard's modern female dresses, in such subjects as Belinda in the Rape of the Lock, Phillis and Brunette, &c., merits great admiration; and here we find that even this comparatively minor excellence was the result of observation and study; for he took pleasure in walking down some of the streets, where the principal shops displayed in their windows rich silks, in order that he might observe their various tints. In a lady's dress there was nothing he so much admired as those which are called *shot silks*; where, as the figure moves in the light, a variety of tint and colour is seen in every fold; and this taste in Stothard may be traced to nature, as we find it in the peacock, and in the breast of the pheasant and the turtle-dove.



Stoddard del.

Heath, sculp.^c

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R.APE OF THE LOCK.



Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone
But every eye was fixed on her alone.

DRAWN BY THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A. ENGRAVED BY W. GREATBATCH.
PUBLISHED BY JOHN SHARPE, LONDON.
AUGUST 1 1828

About the year 1796, Stothard began to study attentively the works of Rubens : this was apparent in the picture he that year exhibited of *Victory* : it had much merit, and possessed that depth of tone



Rape of the Lock.

and richness of colour, in which the great Flemish master was unrivalled.* In the three or four following years he executed fo

* *Victory* was a favourite with Stothard ; he would never part with the picture. After his death it was bought by Mr. Rogers at Christie's sale.

many works, that, merely for a list of the principal, the reader must be referred to the appendix, as here to enumerate them would be tedious.

His reputation had now so much spread amongst the really tasteful and judicious in art, that the Marquis of Exeter, wishing to adorn with paintings the grand staircase of his princely mansion of Burleigh, near Stamford, in Northamptonshire, applied to Stothard to execute the work. For this he made three designs—War, Intemperance, and the descent of Orpheus into Hell. In treating the second subject named, he introduced Cleopatra with Mark Antony, at the moment she is casting the pearl into the cup to dissolve the precious jewel: she is surrounded by the Loves and Graces, and surmounted by allegorical personages and emblems. These paintings were executed on so large a scale, that the figures are nearly eight feet in height, and possess the utmost power and brilliancy of colour. Mr. Alfred Stothard, who saw them a few years ago says, they are as fresh as if just executed, and as a whole, he considers them the finest which this country possesses of his father's works. They occupied four successive summers, commencing in 1799.

Indefatigable as Stothard was whilst employed on these magnificent subjects, he nevertheless found time, at the intervals in which he retired to his own apartment, to execute several designs and pictures of great merit. Amongst them may be named his beautiful compositions for the Historic Gallery, published by Boyer; Cadell and Davies's edition of Gessner; and Kearsley and Heath's Shakespeare.

Some circumstances connected with this last undertaking are too characteristic of Stothard's meek and patient temper to be passed in silence. Heath, fearing that others might engage his pencil for a similar work, caused a bond to be drawn up between them, not



T. Stothard del.

Aug. Fox sculp.

THE TRACHEOTOMY

As performed

quite so fearful in its nature as old Shylock's, but nevertheless sufficiently stringent, as the painter was to forfeit no less a sum than five hundred pounds, if he did not complete the work; and Heath bound himself to forfeit the same sum, if he employed any other artist to make the designs for it. Several were executed that were truly beautiful; but to Stothard's extreme surprise, he soon found the names of Hamilton, Wheatly and others, (artists now almost forgotten by the inferiority of their productions), appended to various designs made for the Shakespeare. The cause of this breach of contract was never stated, but it was shrewdly suspected, that these very second rate artists worked cheaply, which Stothard did not. His friends were indignant, but although he felt he was not well used, he did nothing to enforce the penalty, and never even alluded to it in any hostile manner. The work however suffered, for so inferior were their designs, and so greatly was the hand of Stothard missed, that after he had ceased to labour for it, the sale declined, and the undertaking no longer prospered.

Not only did Stothard execute the paintings already mentioned at Burleigh, but, to oblige the Marquis, he altered and touched the ceilings, several of which were by Verrio; the subjects were Heaven and Hell.*

Whilst he was there, many noble and honourable guests were frequently visiting, and some staying in the house, for the Marquis

* Concerning these ceilings, Stothard required. On one occasion he so enraged the painter by his neglect, that Verrio next morning introduced the offender in his Hell; where, to this day, the luckless master of the spit remains, as Falstaff says of Bardolph's nose, "Burning, burning!"

was exceedingly hospitable. Amongst others was a certain dignitary of the church, who often joined Stothard in his summer evening rambles. On one occasion, he prepared to go out with his nippers and his net to catch butterflies and insects, when his clerical friend thought it became him to read him very gravely a lecture, on the cruel and unchristian-like practice to which he was addicted. This reproof was received with meekness; when going on a little further they came to a piece of water. The fish were making bubbles and rings in it by darting up to the surface to catch the flies—"Bless me," exclaimed the divine, "how plenty the fish are here; I wish I had my rod with me. Are you an angler, Mr. Stothard?" "No," replied Stothard, "I have some doubts about angling, whether it may not be a cruel and unchristian-like practice, when we think of the worm, the hook, and the fish."

Whilst at Burleigh Mr. Stothard's wife, and his son Charles, then a youth, were for awhile guests. Charles drew very well for his age: but wanting employment with his pencil, to fill up his time, his father told him to go and make drawings of some ancient effigies in the neighbouring churches. He did so; and there can be no doubt this circumstance occasioned his first turning his attention to Gothic sculpture; and gave rise to a fondness for the study of antiquity, which, at a more mature age, rendered him eminent as an antiquary, and led the way to his original and beautiful work on *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain*.

Amongst a multiplicity of rude drafts of letters in the handwriting of Stothard (too imperfect to be given) I found one addressed to the Marquis of Exeter, on the completion of the paintings. It is written in a very confused manner: yet shows great delicacy on the part of the painter; and the very confusion



T. Richard H. S. del.

J. O. Walker Jr. sc.

which pervades the whole, seems the result of what I ever thought to be a marked feature in his character—namely, the pain he experienced when obliged to revert to pecuniary demands; or, as he said, in another letter (to a different person who did not pay him as he had often promised) “to do what he hated, *ask for money.*”

In this letter to the Marquis, he states that the paintings on the great staircase were to be completed for one thousand guineas, and to be finished in three years. In the time he was at work he had received nine hundred and ninety-three pounds for the years—

1799	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	£63
1800	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	315
1801	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	315
1802	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	300

By this statement, he said, 57*l.* were deficient of the thousand guineas. But the year 1803, he considered “an indulgence added to the preceding years, on the same terms.” On that year (1803) he had, at the time of writing, received only 50*l.*, leaving due to him 265*l.*, to which might he be allowed to add the 57*l.*, it would make the amount due to be 322*l.* But continues he—“If the mention of the 57*l.* should appear in the least unreasonable” (and he says in the letter, he entertained doubts about the propriety of mentioning it at all,) and “if your Lordship thought the indulgence of another year added to the former, ample compensation to smooth any difference in that account, in such case,” he concludes, “your sentiments on this matter will be received with cheerful compliance by your Lordship’s most obedient servant, Thos. Stothard.”

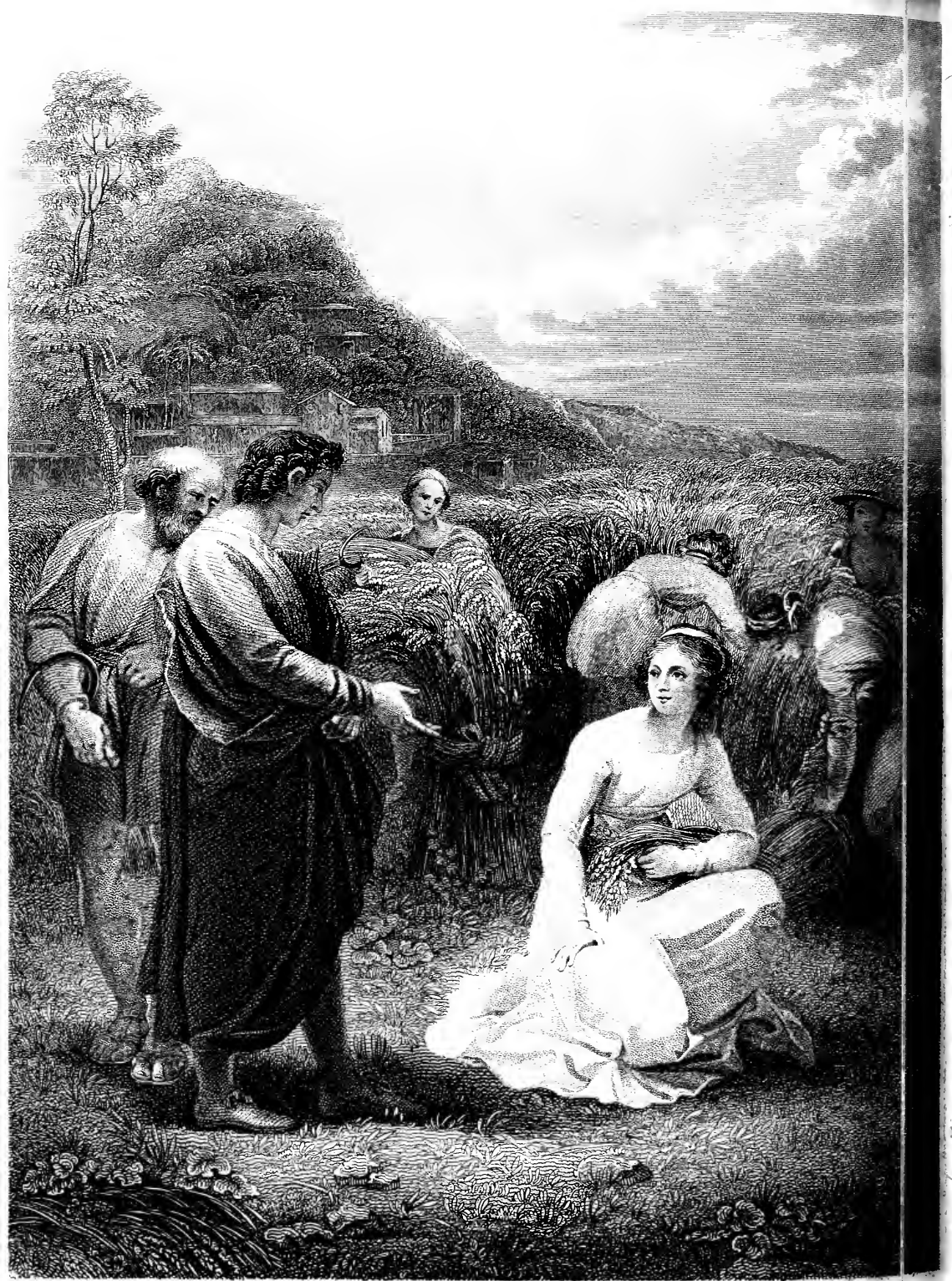
At the end of this rough draft appears, written *in pencil*, (but not in Stothard’s hand) these words:—

“ Lord Exeter has directed me to pay Mr. Stothard 300*l.*”

The hand-writing of this is business-like; and may, probably, have been that of the house-steward of the Marquis, the late Mr. Christian, with whom our artist was on terms of familiar intercourse; and to whom, it is not improbable, he might have submitted the above draft of an intended letter; when finding, as intimated by the note in pencil, that his Lordship had directed the payment of a sum, so very nearly that which he had calculated on receiving, the letter was not sent at all. In my own mind, I have no doubt such was the fact, as it is not for a moment to be supposed that a nobleman of such liberality as the Marquis of Exeter, and who always treated Stothard (as he invariably said) in so handsome and friendly a manner, would have cut off the twenty two pounds from his account.

I must not omit stating that, previous to his engagement at Burleigh, Stothard, amongst many other works, produced his Boaz first seeing Ruth Gleaning, than which nothing can be more striking. It reminds us of the old masters, to the finest of whose scriptural works it is, in every way, equal as a composition. The beauty, the grace, the unaffected and natural attitude of Ruth, who, having just raised herself from the ground, looks up, surprised by the notice of Boaz; the dignity of his person, as he addresses her with interest; the servant placed over the reapers, who stands near him; and the figures busied among the corn, altogether present a scene perfect in its patriarchal truth and simplicity. The buildings and terraces, seen in the background, as the finish of the picture, have in them an appropriate character of Eastern taste and opulence.





Whilst at Burleigh, Stothard frequently wrote to his wife; most of the letters have been preserved; but although they abound



Boaz and Ruth. Designed by Stothard for Macklin's Bible, 1791.

in the expressions of an affectionate care for her and his children,

they do not give any information about his work, more than casually mentioning how closely he applied to it, and that his performance greatly pleased his noble employer. The following extracts, however, selected from many passages of a similar nature, will, I trust, be found of some little interest to the reader, as they show the heart of the man in its most amiable character.

TO MRS. STOTHARD.

“DEAR REBECCA,

“Since I last wrote, I have been very busy sketching a design for the staircase; and, at the same time, seeing that the walls are properly prepared, and colours ground, &c. I have been so intent on this pursuit, as to let three days escape me out of six; for, believe me, I mistook last Saturday for last Wednesday; and this was the cause of your disappointment in not hearing from me. I told you in my last, Lord Exeter had been here, and went from hence the day before my arrival, which has prevented my seeing him. I think it is better that it so happened, as I had nothing to show his Lordship. If he returns about the time my business concludes, as I conjecture he will, I may settle the future with more confidence. * * * I am glad to hear Charles is well, and hope he does not run away from his dinner-hour; as he is growing, I am more anxious about this, for he has been too apt to go out and not return in proper time. Let your next letter be a little longer, and tell me more of yourself, and how your time has passed away. Has any one been to see you, or Miss Nayler paid you the visit she promised you? It will give me pleasure to hear you have so agreeable a companion; in short, give me a few particulars, it will break through the continued anxiety I feel in my



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Michard del.

Heath sculp.

present undertaking, which now entirely depends on my own efforts. One day is so like another, on account of the extreme regularity—it was in some degree the cause of my forgetting time as I did last week.” * * *

The next extract is still from Burleigh, and in the autumn of the same year, 1799.

“I shall not come home till Thursday. If the fatigue of travelling all night is not too much for me, I promise myself the happiest hours I have experienced a good while in your company and the children’s; so let me see them in their best bib and tucker, and we will make a holiday of it. I should have been with you on Sunday, but Lord Exeter is going from hence, and will not return till Monday; meanwhile I am to draw up an agreement and state the terms of our future proceedings, which, I am happy to tell you, promise to be much to my mind, and will give *you* pleasure, which is my chief happiness.

“ Believe me yours ever affectionately,

“ THOMAS STOTHARD.”

The next is from Burleigh in 1800.

“ DEAR REBECCA,

“ Don’t interpret my delay in writing to negligence or indifference, nor think I have forgot my first intention of paying you all a visit; nothing but my being very busy here, makes my absence tolerable. Burleigh and the scenes about it are no palliative, so you must expect to see me soon. I believe I can start in a

fortnight, and return to finish that end of the staircase I am now painting by the time my Lord returns with his new bride, which will be some time in August. * * * You have some doubts if I were courting, whether I should not more readily steal an hour to write to you; perhaps so—but this I am sure of, I do not love you less; and am more easy, having confidence in your sincerity and virtue. My love to the children, and receive the same from your affectionate husband,

“THOMAS STOTHARD.”

From the letters addressed to Mrs. Stothard in 1801, I make the following extracts.

“MY DEAR REBECCA,

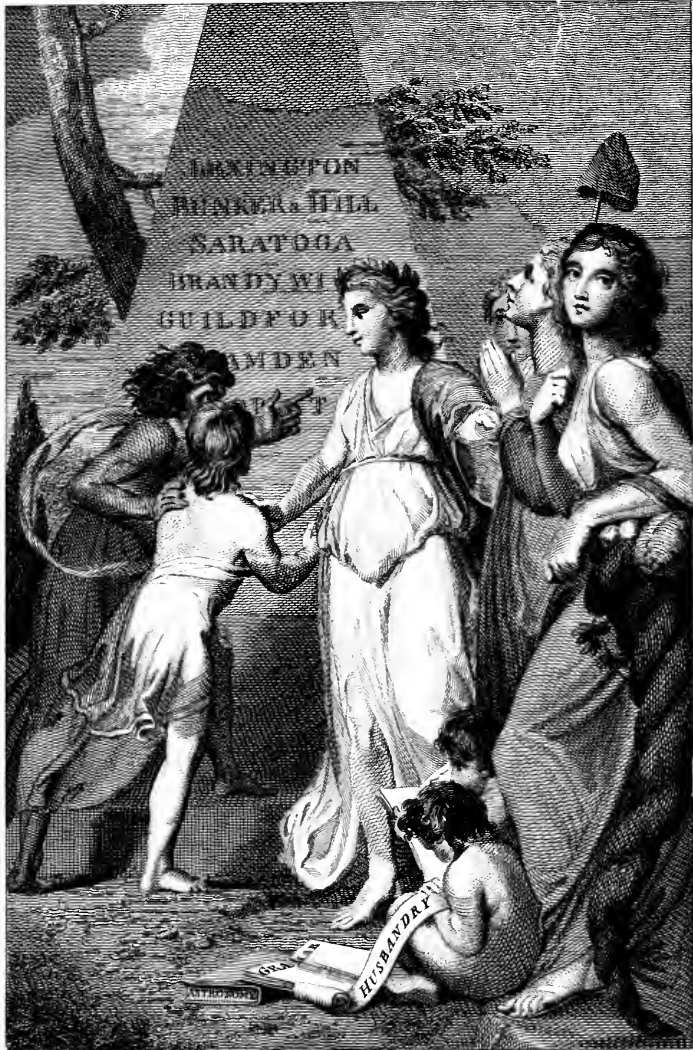
“It was with pleasure I received your two last letters; indeed they came at a time my anxiety was almost intolerable. I am now happy so far. * * * The delay you have complained of respecting my writing, you must afford some indulgence to, as I have much to do here, and till I have broken the neck of the work in hand, can find very little respite, and independent of the attention I must bestow, I am in the continual exercise of ascending and descending steps, and shifting them from place to place. I find myself perfectly jaded before night, and sometimes could dispense with my supper for bed. With this combination of mental and bodily exercise, I should not write were it not to yourself.”

“Burleigh, Sept. 6, 1801.

“DEAR REBECCA,

* * * “I am endeavouring to conclude my business

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Richard del.

Cook sculp.

here before the end of this month ; the day I cannot ascertain in the present state of the work. The Marquis and Marchioness seem well pleased and pay me flattering attentions ; I therefore should not like to leave Burleigh with my work slovenly done, and thereby forfeit their good opinion for the future, as well as the public's. On this you may depend, that I am not backward in my exertions to make a good finish for the present summer. I write this, my dear Rebecca, that you may know my present situation, and thereby make yours as agreeable as you can, which I hope is pleasant."

"Sept. 13, 1801.

"DEAR REBECCA,

"Write to me by return of post, if it be but two lines, informing me how you are, and how Hammersmith agrees with you, for I am unhappy till I hear from you. Don't perplex yourself with the idea of filling a sheet, you need tell me of nothing but your health, and I shall be satisfied ; for myself, I am determined to be with you before the twenty-sixth if possible. * * * If you are at Hammersmith, tell me how you spend your time, &c. If you use much exercise ; if you avail yourself of country milk at breakfast instead of tea ; whether you study diet more than physic ? However, I long to be with you, and consult you concerning your health ; and, trust me, nothing shall be spared in my power to recover you. Do scratch a line, my dear Rebecca, immediately. Again I repeat it, and you will afford consolation to your ever affectionate husband,

"THOMAS STOTHARD."

“ Burleigh, Monday, October 5, 1801.

“ MY DEAR REBECCA,

“ The day after I wrote to you I received yours. I felt great pleasure to find you had spent your fortnight so agreeably at my aunt's. It spread an air of cheerfulness over your letter which convinced me your health was benefitted by it. You will not doubt, my dear, my wish to see you and the children after my long absence. I had determined on leaving Burleigh on the eighth inst. at farthest; and had signified to my Lord my intentions without specifying the time. Since I wrote to you last, he has requested I would make it convenient to stay till the twelfth, which is Monday next, five days longer than myself had proposed. On the whole, I am better pleased that he has fixed the time than myself. We have, this month past, been all bustle and life; much company going and coming, too numerous for me to remember their names, so I shall not attempt to send them to you; and for more interesting particulars, I intend to bring them with me. I have the pleasure to tell you I am much better in my health of late than in times past; and I believe if I were here longer, I should fill up and become quite another thing—but I must first forget home, which is impossible; so expect me next Tuesday.

“ I am, dear Rebecca, yours most affectionately,

“ THOMAS STOTHARD.”

“ MY DEAR REBECCA,

“ It was my intention to have been with you at the time you will receive this letter; but now I must tell you for the last time, I shall not be with you till Friday noon. As I have settled





everything with my Lord, I shall have nothing now to oppose the earnest desire I feel of seeing you after my three or four months' absence. As I have received very kind attentions from Lord and Lady Exeter, I wish to return it by a cheerful compliance with their wishes that I should stay at Burleigh till Thursday, when they themselves will take leave of this place for a fortnight or more. As for myself, at all events, I shall take a place in the coach for town, and dine with you on Friday; of this be assured. You have in your former letters enquired after our friends here. They are all well; they often mention you, with respectful enquiries after your welfare. Lady Exeter, in particular, pleased me by her kind manner of enquiring after you."

The next letter is also from Burleigh.

"Sunday, Sept. 3, 1802.

"MY DEAR REBECCA,

"I find a fortnight is too long a time not to hear from you; indeed if you knew how much I suffer from apprehension for your health, I am certain you would not delay writing. I hope nothing has happened to prevent the fulfilment of your promised coming here. Every accommodation is prepared for your reception. The country yet retains its former dress, and with the weather is altogether delightful. I have selected one of the pleasantest apartments for your use. Let me entreat you, my dear, not to delay any longer or lose the present opportunity. I think you may contrive to stay here a fortnight at least, and for your health's sake longer; but you must not lose any time, but come, and don't let trifles prevent you. In your next letter tell me the day I

may expect you, and the coach you come by, that I may meet you at Stamford. When I wrote to you last, the Marquis's health was in that state to render it very uncertain how long he would stay from hence; at present he has recovered, and entertains the hopes of a longer absence from Burleigh. As for myself, I find my health governed very much by your letters, or your silence; so pray write to me by the return of post. Give my love to the children, and accept the same from your affectionate husband,

“ T. STOTHARD.

“ P. S. Bring with you the vols. of the Spectator, and Bewick's History of Quadrupeds.”

During the time his great work was in progress at Burleigh, Stothard lost his mother, who lived to attain the age of 87 years. She died in his house in Newman-street, where for so long a period she had experienced, both from himself and his wife, the most kind and affectionate care.*

* I have but one circumstance more to mention in connexion with Burleigh; and although it may be here somewhat out of place, it ought not to be omitted, as it serves to show the respect in which the memory of Stothard was held not only at that noble mansion, but in the neighbourhood. Some years ago, his son Alfred visited Burleigh, in order to see his father's greatest work. The Marquis was absent, but he was most kindly received by the household. Some of the principal tradespeople of the town of Stamford, hearing

he was there, called a meeting and proposed to give a public dinner to the son of Stothard, as a token of gratitude for the benefit his father had conferred on their town by the number of strangers who resorted to it, in order to see the magnificent paintings on the staircase of Burleigh House. The dinner was arranged, and actually given, although, from some error in the sending or the delivery of the letter of invitation, Mr. Alfred Stothard had gone away before it arrived!



CHAPTER III.

Stothard's Death of Nelson—His Robinson Crusoe making his Long Boat—Visits the English Lakes and Scotland—His Jubilee Transparency—Designs from Froissart—Visits Hafod—Col. Johnes—Death of Miss Johnes—Stothard's design for her monument—His letters from Hafod.

IN the year 1804, Stothard was so occupied by commissions, that he sent nothing to Somerfet House ; but in the following year he



Queen Charlotte surrounded by The Royal Family. From a pocket-book.

contributed what was not at all calculated for an exhibition picture ; his sketchy design for a portion of the staircase at Burleigh, which by many who looked at it, could not be understood. In 1806, he was applied to by the widow of John Macklin, the publisher, to go

down to Chatham, and there take steps preparatory for a picture of the Death of Nelson; a print from which she proposed to publish by subscription. He made some bold pen and ink drawings from the heads of several sailors of the Victory: he was to receive two hundred pounds for the picture, and commenced it; but Mrs. Macklin not being able to meet with subscribers sufficient to carry out her plan, the picture remained, unfinished, on his hands, and in that state was sold after his death at Christie's.*

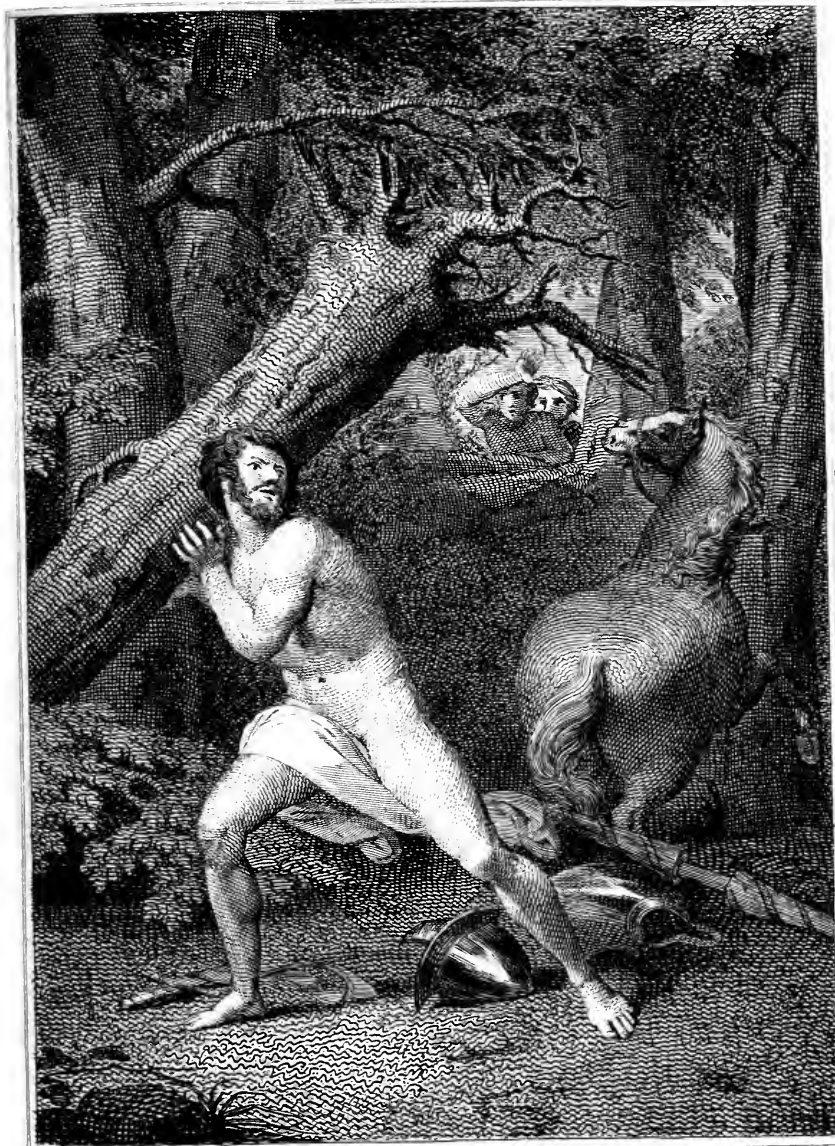
In 1808, Stothard exhibited, amongst many other works, his exquisite design of Robinson Crusoe making his Long Boat.

The next occurrence in the life of our Academician was his visit to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland in 1809; whence he proceeded in the same year to Edinburgh, and afterwards to various parts of Scotland, for the purpose of illustrating, for Mr. Constable, an edition which he was about to publish of the Poems of Burns. The great merit of the drawings and designs he made for the works of that exquisite poet of nature, raised his name so highly in Scotland, that, some years after, he was chosen (as will be noticed in due place) to adorn with his pencil one of the national institutions of the capital.

On his return to town, as nothing came amiss to him, he executed for Messrs. Rundle and Bridge a large transparency, which was displayed in front of their house at Ludgate Hill, and greatly admired on the Jubilee day, held in honour of good King George

* I am fortunate enough to possess a very good collection of Stothard's original drawings, besides a few of his oil paintings. Amongst the former are some of the sketches that he made of the sailors who were on

board Nelson's ship at the time of the action in which the naval hero lost his life. These sketches are very striking, and remind one of some of the old drawings by artists of the Venetian School.



Stothard del.

Parks sc.

the Third having reigned fifty years. In this picture King George appeared seated on a throne, furrounded by the Cardinal Virtues. To the right and left of the Sovereign were seen spiral columns, to one of which History was engaged in attaching the



Pilgrim's Progress, engraved 1789. The Reception. Christian's conduct amidst the difficulties he had passed through, meeting with the approbation of Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity, he is received joyfully into the Palace Beautiful.

names of the naval and military victories of his reign: Mars and Neptune were reclining at his feet.

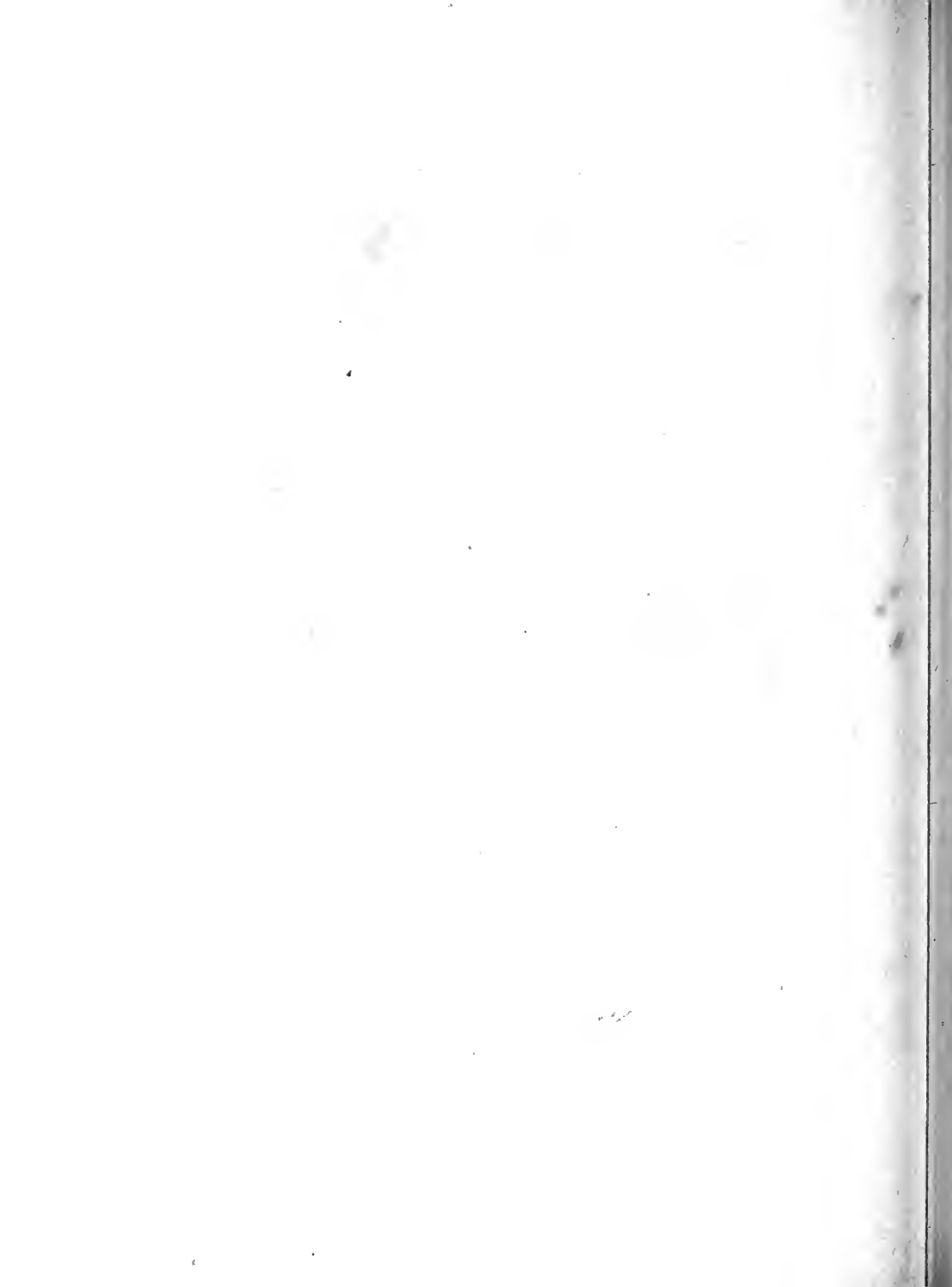
It was, I believe, both before and after this period, that he was employed by the late Col. Johnes to decorate the splendid and beautifully situated mansion he had erected at Hafod, near the Devil's Bridge, in North Wales. Col. Johnes had then recently translated the Chronicles of Froissart and Monstrelet; and Stothard was requested by him to select from them subjects for pictorial

decorations. In another way he was also of infinite service to Hafod. So varied was the genius, and so great the knowledge, of this eminent painter, in every branch of the fine arts, that his taste in architecture only wanted opportunity for its development. Col. Johnes consulted him about the internal finish of his house; and I have found fragments of his plans and advice, and directions concerning this matter, which (though in too rude and scattered a form to render it possible to give them here) show how readily and how zealously he entered upon a subject foreign to his general pursuits.

I have seen several of his original sketches and designs for his paintings at Hafod; and these chivalrous scenes,—mostly, I believe, in illustration of Froissart, possessed all the accustomed merits of his works, in composition and execution.

To a mind like Stothard's, Hafod must have been a delightful place of retreat, could he have prevailed with himself to be a little less laborious than he was whilst in such a spot, and in such society as he there found. Col. Johnes, though neither gifted with the genius nor the high intellectual powers which distinguished Mr. Beckford (another wealthy patron of Stothard), was nevertheless a man of useful and praiseworthy literary pursuits, and of a most cultivated taste in the fine arts. He had been the friend and patron of Banks the sculptor, whose classic merit he appreciated when it was sadly neglected by the world at large. He had aided nature by his skill in the decoration of his own grounds, amidst some of the wildest and most striking scenery of North Wales; for both cataract and mountain were within his domain. He twice raised a princely mansion in this favoured spot, and each time enriched it with the choicest works of art; and, what was not less deserving record, at





a time of much public distress, by making roads around him, and other considerable works, he gave, by labour, bread to hundreds of the poor in his vicinity. Such was Col. Johnes.

His wife was a woman entitled to respect as well for her understanding as her character; and his daughter, an only child, admired, beloved by all who approached her, was almost idolized by



Pilgrim's Progress, engraved 1789. The Reflection. Mercy persuaded by Christiana to accompany her and her children upon their Pilgrimage, reflects on the dangerous state of her relations, and weeps at leaving them behind.

her father. In person Miss Johnes had the misfortune to be somewhat deformed; but she had a most beautiful face and a still more beautiful mind. Her manners were captivating; she was an admirable musician, and sang with uncommon feeling: indeed, her acquirements were extensive; and Stothard, who sincerely esteemed her, aided and directed her studies in drawing, and felt an interest in

her progress, which must have arisen from his conviction that she possessed no inconsiderable talents for the art. Such were the inmates of Hafod in 1810, when Stothard was there in the threefold relation of guest, artist, and friend. Alas! in how short a time did that happy and social circle completely pass away! In the summer of 1811 the amiable and gifted Miss Johnes died suddenly, in the very prime of youth, and in the midst of all its fairest hopes and promises. Her father survived her a very few years; the last work in the fine arts in which he took any interest was the monument he erected to his beloved daughter. Stothard designed it; Chantrey sculptured it.* Mrs. Johnes, widowed, childless, and heart-broken, did not long outlive her husband; and Hafod itself (at least the original mansion), even before its founder's death, was, together with many noble works of Art which it contained, destroyed by fire.†

The following letters in connection with Hafod will, I hope, possess some little interest here:—

TO MRS. STOTHARD.

“Hafod, 1810.

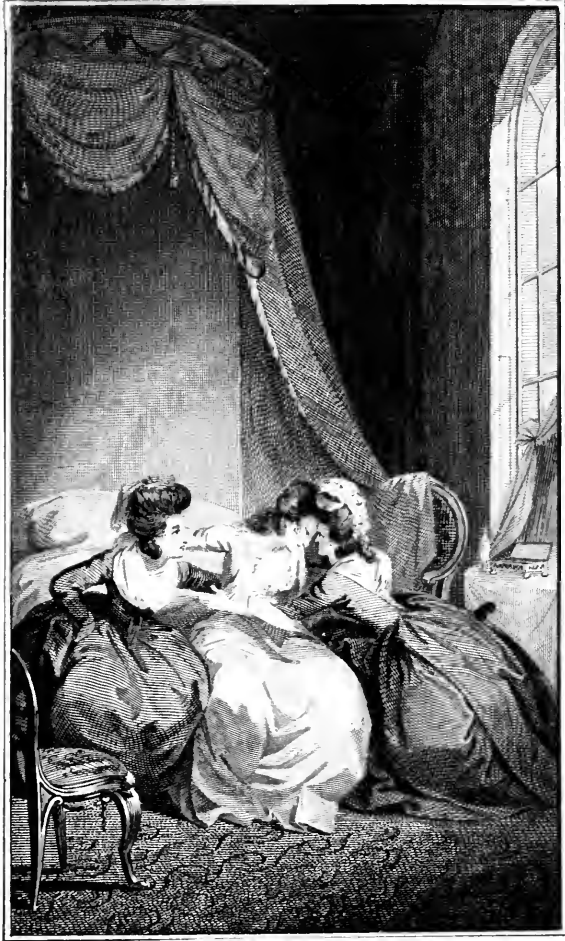
“MY DEAR REBECCA,

“Since your first letter I have been very unhappy in

* It represented the sorrowing parent standing by the couch of his dying child. In consequence of the death of Col. Johnes, this beautiful monument remained for some years after its completion, till, I believe, the Colonel's affairs were settled, in the possession of the sculptor.

† Stothard's paintings at Hafod were for the house which was built after the

great fire. They were for the library (it was of an octagonal form), and painted in imitation of sculpture. They filled the panels, eight in number, on the upper part of the room. After the death of Col. Johnes, Hafod was bought by the Duke of Newcastle: great alterations were made in the house, and Stothard's paintings were sent to London, and sold by Christie.





reading your account of yourself. I had no resource from the unpleasant thoughts you had made me entertain, but to apply still more closely (if possible) to my engagements here, and to return as soon as possible home. You have not an idea how my time is filled up, though I think I wrote you some account of it in my last. I have no exercise but what the pencil affords me, and sometimes running from one part of the house to the other. Sometimes I get an hour out of doors, to get a little air. The small room I paint in affords me none; filled, as it is, with eight canvasses, with my colours, oils and turpentine, &c. All the family here, without exception, are very solicitous to administer to my convenience; and I have some difficulty to resist the repeated requests of Mr. Johnes that I would go out more for my health's sake. I mention this to convince you that I might be happy enough with my situation here, if yours and the children's welfare did not solely possess me. If I wish to succeed well with the subjects I am painting, to gain credit and future engagements, it is for your sake; and the care of my health, for the same reason, that I may undertake what better may insure it. This, my dear, believe is from my heart, with which compliment has nothing to do."

TO COL. JOHNES.*

"DEAR SIR,

"I have delayed writing so long that it has become a task to make anything like a decent apology. The truth indeed is this, I fully expected to have sent the whole of your commissions, not to obtrude a correspondence relative merely to myself. I have

* This letter has no date; but as Miss the summer of 1811, it was probably Johnes is mentioned in it, and she died in written in the year 1810.

procured the plaster casts to assist Miss Johnes in her studies. It was my intention, when I came to town, to have got casts from originals; but, on considering the expence and hazard of carriage, and moreover the imperfect specimens of the casts—the casts to be procured are so blunt from bad moulds, that I would not recommend them—I have since had recourse to a few good copies, yet as far superior to the others; and they will answer every purpose of study, are more profitable, and will better command a good light, and are ornamental. To have the extremities well defined, I procured them from an ingenious young man, a student in our Academy: I am confident he will do his best to please me. The subjects are the Apollo Belvedere, Venus de Medicis, the Antinous, and Hercules Farnese: he assures me they shall be carefully packed, and, as he understands these things, and has had experience, I have every reason to think they will reach you safely.

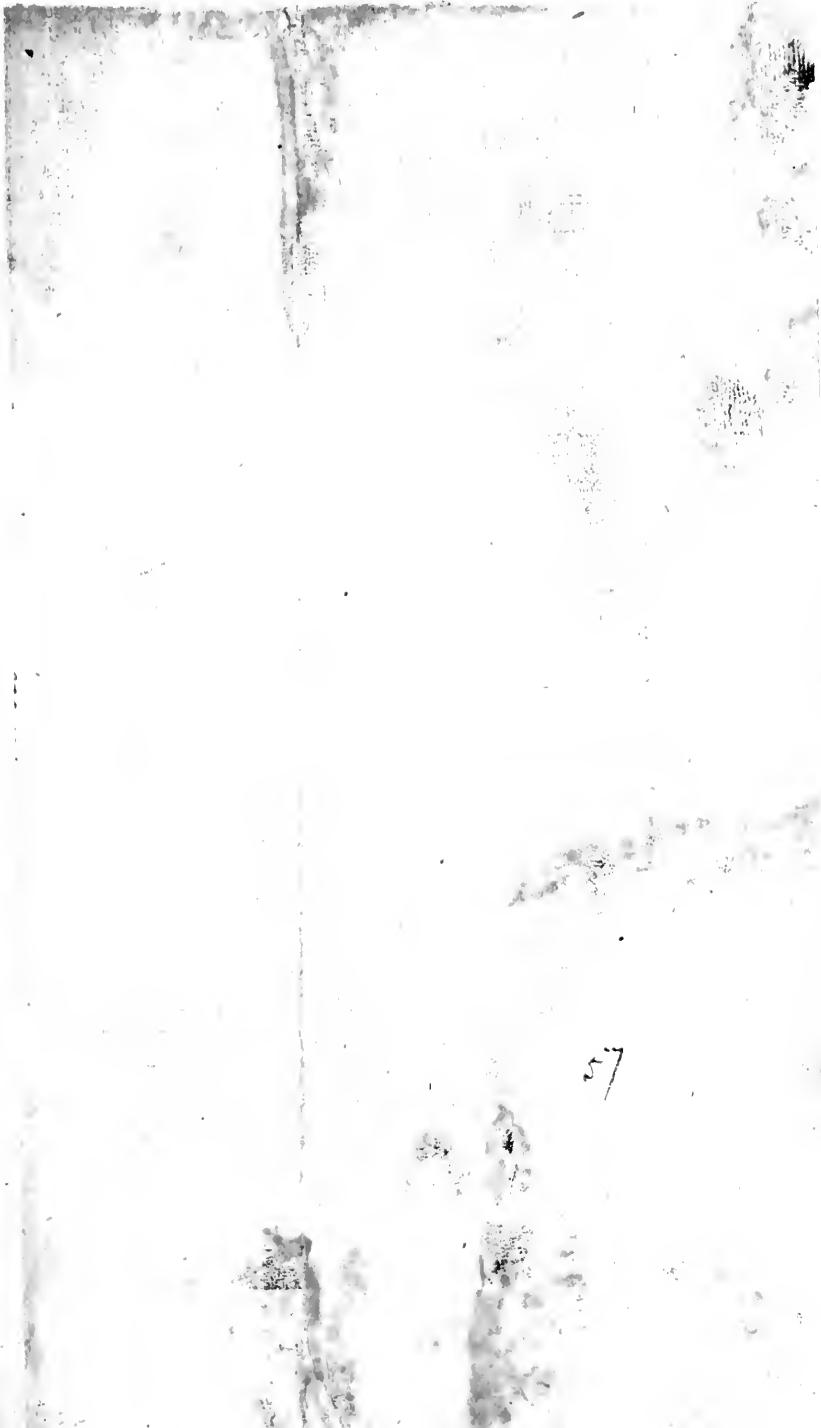
“The Gothic screen—concerning this, I have applied to Messrs. Underwood and Doyle, in Holborn, whose business is solely in this way. I explained to them, by means of my sketch, the kind of ornaments and the dimensions, and requested to know what they thought the expence might amount to—the glass excepted. Their answer was, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds, or thereabouts. They informed me at the same time, that the drawing I had made was too slight, and required strengthening with the aid of woodwork. I have in consequence made another drawing and coloured the wood red, that you might distinguish it from the rest, in the space between column and column. I have given three distinct designs for your choice—amend or reject. I have not neglected your idea of taking the whole to pieces at pleasure. With respect to the arms, I spoke to Mr. Hand; he tells me his terms are from five



Richard del.

Walker, sculp.

56.



57



Stewart del.

Duckett sculp.

THE TEMPLE OF MIRTH.

Published as the Act directs by Harrison & Co^{rs} Feb^y 1784.

guineas to twenty—that the difference is with or without supporters, and the colours, which require different degrees of heat in firing.



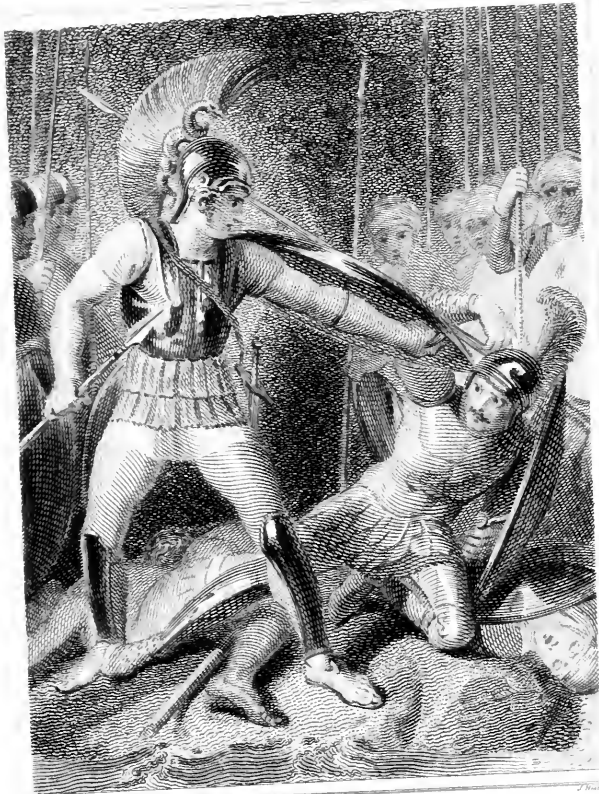
The Wits' Assembly. a frontispiece to the Wits' Magazine. 1781.

“I have enclosed Mr. Daniel's East India views, as they are divided into classes, and their price.

“A little pamphlet is all I could procure from the person I applied to concerning the new invented lights. I don't find the town lighter this winter; none have followed his example.* These things I

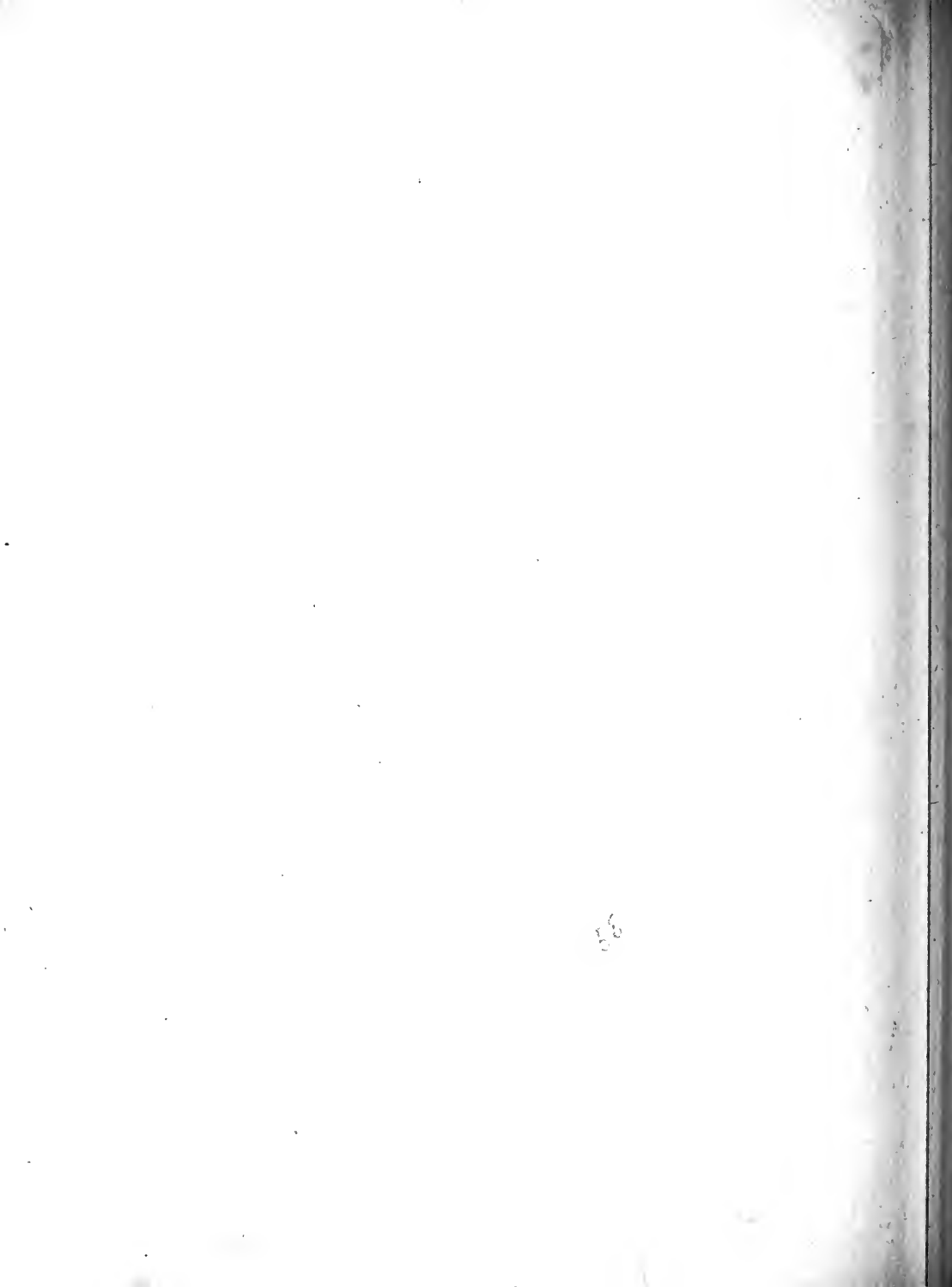
* Written before the gas lights became general.

got packed together in one box, and a few etceteras for Miss Johnes, and am only waiting for information from you to what place you think it will best suit you to have them sent. From our friend Mr. Malkin, I have had the pleasure to hear of the welfare of your family; and permit me, sir, to add my earnest wish for its continuance; and that I may be remembered to Mrs. Johnes, my opponent in the field of chess, and to my pupil, who, I hope, perseveres in the few, though essential hints, I gave her at Hafod."



*For one last effort then his scattered strength
Collecting, level'd with resistless force
The massive orb, and dash'd its frozen verge
Full on the Persians' forehead.*

Lucinda Book 7



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CHAPTER IV.

Archdeacon Markham and Stothard's friends and patrons—Extracts from his letters—His modest estimate of himself—Recommends the study of Raphael and Albert Durer—The cartoon of St. Paul preaching to the Athenians—The Transfiguration—Stothard's opinion of the same—His letter on his journey to Paris.

I DO not know at what period Stothard first became acquainted with the Rev. Robert Markham, Archdeacon of York, and Rector of Bolton Percy, Yorkshire. But in this gentleman he found a patron who was an enthusiastic admirer of his genius, and a friend. Stothard was more than once his guest; and when the Archdeacon was carrying on extensive improvements in his house, under the late Mr. Alexander, the architect, our artist's taste was called in to give assistance, and all he suggested was approved. Miss Georgiana Markham, like Miss Johnes, became his pupil, and he ever spoke of the whole family in terms of the warmest esteem and regard.

The late Mr. Benfon, of Doncaster, was likewise his intimate friend; and he painted for him several very beautiful pictures, among them a copy of the Canterbury Pilgrims. The following scraps of advice on art, were found among the rude drafts of his letters, the first was addressed to Mr. Benfon. Stothard says:—"I am glad to hear of your application to painting; and that I have had a share in contributing anything towards it. I flatter myself you have improved, and will no doubt continue to do so, by having a proper

confidence, and proceeding with care. You have a very pleasant field before you to select from. And, now I am on the subject, I will recommend (if I did not before mention it) to leave sometimes still life and attempt living subjects. It will make a variety in your studies, and give you an opportunity to introduce the plants and flowers as growing where the animals haunt. This will require an exertion of taste, and so much the better. You have nothing to do but consult nature, and your own good sense in

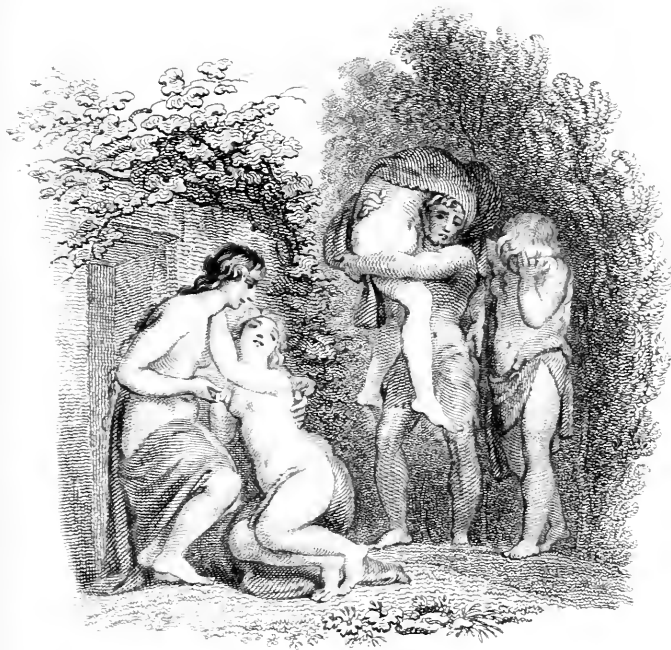


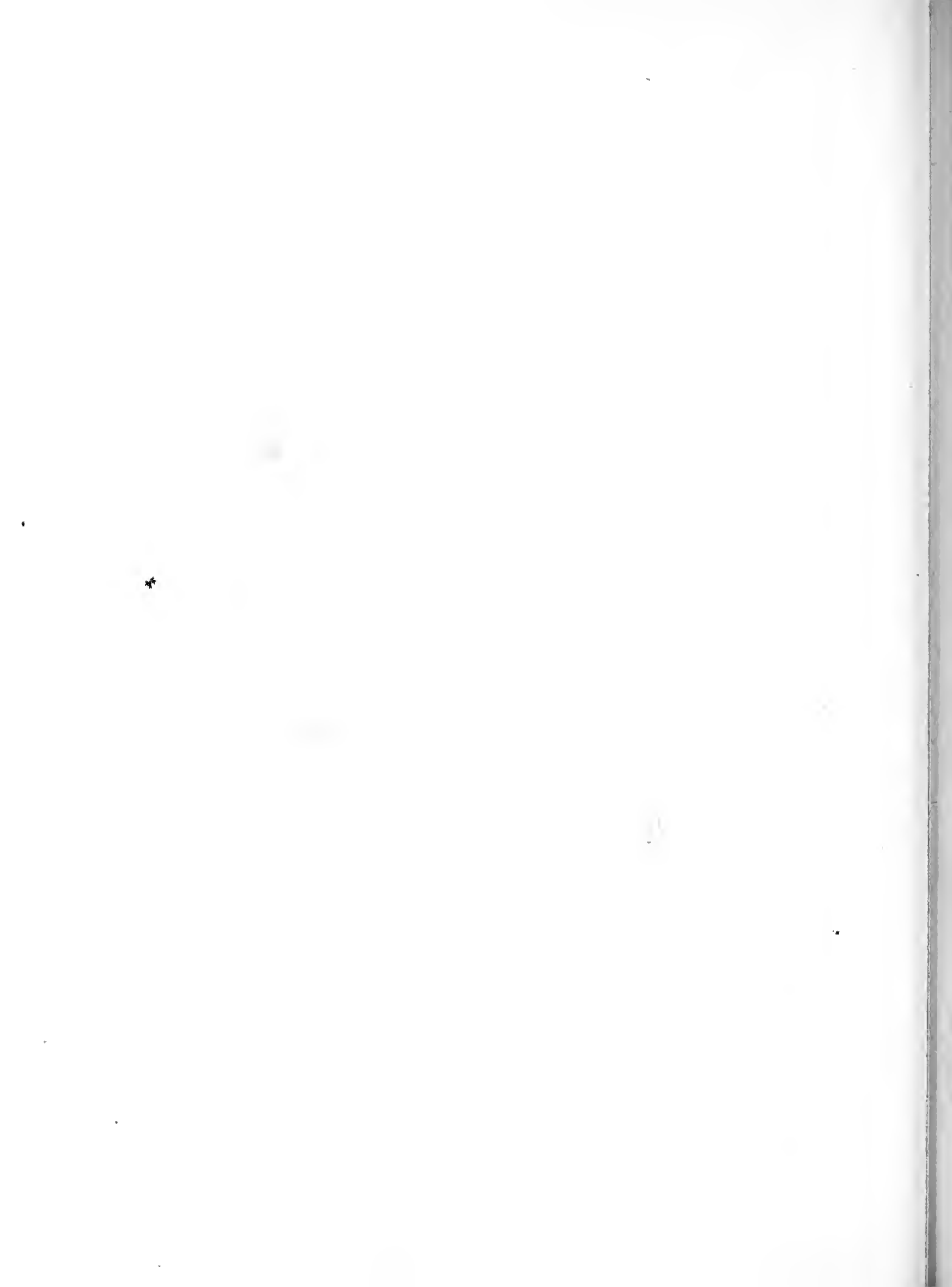
The Seasons. A vignette published in 1793.

"There is who deems all climes, all seasons fair;
Contentment; thankful for the gift of life."—J. Scott's Poems.

the selection. One thing I have to recommend; do not introduce any landscape, either as a distant or a middle ground, for such things do no good; they distract the attention—in short, destroy each other. One thing I advise, which comprehends everything, let your objects be few and well discriminated."

In a fragment of a letter to the Rev. Mr. Markham, he says of Miss Markham. "I observed considerable improvement in the





little time I was with her ; especially the last two days. I hope she will remember what I so earnestly repeated regarding the *delicate softness*, as well as *breadth* of the shadows so necessary to produce roundness and relief ; at the same time to remember a piece of advice I gave, not to sit too long without rising ; to retire and compare the effect of the drawing with the original."

In another letter Stothard writes concerning this lady—"I am very well pleased to hear that my pupil makes no abatement in her studies ; and provided she devotes some time daily to draw with care and attention from good originals, I shall be more indulgent as to what may engage her attention at another time. Flaxman's designs are good as to outline, but on that very account, do not go far enough, wanting light and shade, which I very much wish Georgiana to obtain."

The kind interest he took in cultivating the talents of this young friend, is further seen in the following :—"I have since my return, indulged my fancy in supposing I see the Miss M——'s, the one agreeably engaged in drawing the other. I hope this will be realised.

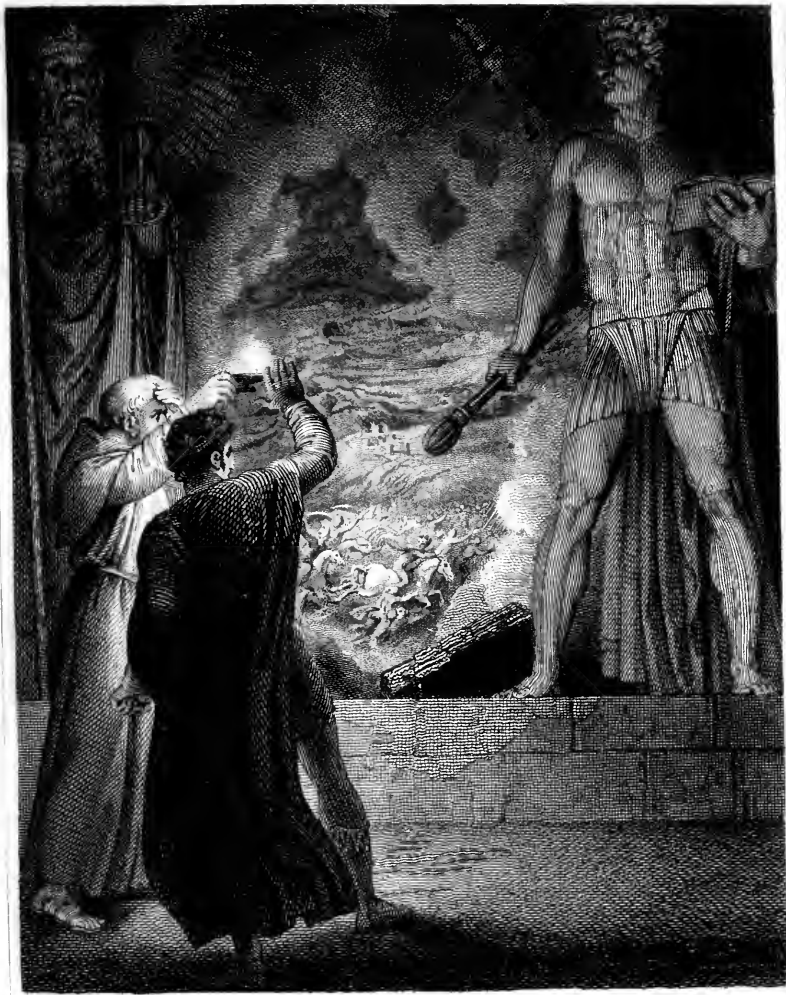
* * What think you if Georgiana were to call up sufficient resolution to attempt one or more of the best approved heads in the Paul Veronese's picture I saw in the Chapter House ? I cannot help thinking it would afford a good opportunity for study of light and shade, as well as keeping her hand in practice till her return to Phidias."

Highly as Stothard regarded Archdeacon Markham and his domestic circle ; they were not the only family of influence and station who, at this period, at once patronised the talents, and cultivated the friendship of our Academician. Col. Johnes, and Mr. Benson, Mr. Thomas Hope, Mr. Boddington, Mr. Beckford,

Mr. Champernown, of Dartington, Devon, Mr. Rogers the poet, and Mr. Flaxman the sculptor, were numbered amongst his patrons and friends; the two last named were peculiarly dear to him. I regret I cannot more particularly mention, not only these, but many other gentlemen of rank and eminence with whom he was acquainted, and from whom he received acts of kindness and attention, in the early part of his career. But, as I have before intimated, Stothard was so retiring and reserved in all which related to himself and his own honour, it was only by a casual circumstance or remark, or by something told by others, who knew him well, that any information could be gained on many points respecting him.

Indeed he was at all times remarkable for a modesty so perfect, that in all his great works (and throughout a whole life devoted to his pencil), I am persuaded he never once thought about himself as being the artist who produced them. He thought about the things he did, and delighted in them because he delighted in the employment of his imagination in producing them; with him all was pure abstracted love of the art, unconnected with self. He painted as Shakespeare wrote, throwing himself into the characters and scenes that he called up, and embodied in his own mind.

The mechanical part of any art once mastered, the highest efforts of genius are always made with comparative ease in their great outline or conception, so was it with Stothard; and hence was it that he, like every other man of transcendent merit, was always modest. The images called forth by the powers of his own imagination rushed upon him like visions of inspiration, he was conscious of no effort—of nothing like *cleverness* (which implies ingenuity, or a skilful exertion of endeavour), the thing seeming to come of itself; how then could he feel vain about it? yet such



Painted by J. Costello, R.A.



modesty is not at all inconsistent with that strong internal conviction, which every man of real merit possesses, respecting his own order of capacity. He feels that nature has given him a stand on higher

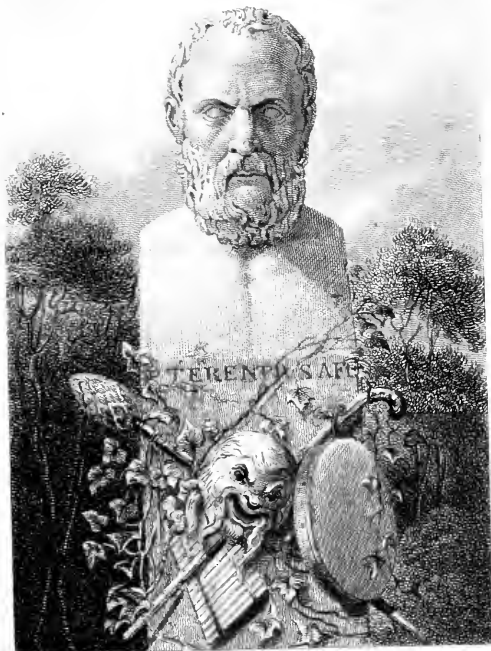


Cupid and Campaspe. Engraved 1700.

ground than most of his contemporaries; but he does not look down on them, but above himself. What he does is great, but he still feels that greatness has a spirit which is ever mounting—that

refts on no fummit within mortal view, but foars again and again in fearch of an ideal height, on which to paufe and fold its wings. It is alfo another invariable mark of true genius that it thinks more of the few, or of the one, to whom it has been accuftomed to look up to in early life as a mafter, than of any effort of its own. This conviction of a fuperior, and the habitual refpect paid to fuch, will often remain and cling to the modeft man of genius through life, even when he is become the equal of that one fuperior being in his own line of art.

Such modefty was a marked feature in the character of Stothard. He always talked of Raphael and Rubens, with the reverence of a young ftudent of their works; and he recommended to young ftudents, who confulted him, that they fhould thoroughly imbue themfelves with a knowledge of and a feeling for Raphael, as the mighty mafter of historical compofition in its fimpleft, nobleft, fweeteft clafs. He advifed daily copying from him in outline; and for this purpofe he recommended a work called Raphael's Bible. I never faw but one copy of it, by Lanfranco, and that was badly drawn and engraved. It confifted of a very large collection of defigns (taken from the Vatican), by Raphael, illuflrative of the Scriptures. The bad drawing and engraving Stothard confidered of no confequence; becaufe, if the ftudent attended to his own drawing as he ought to do, by copying from the antique, he could eafily correct the drawing, making the limbs &c., in juft proportion in his own fketches, as he copied from thefe fubjects, and the ftudy of them would open his eyes, in a wonderful manner, to difcern what was really excellent in the great art of historical compofition. He would fee how fimplly Raphael told the ftory of his piece; yet what admirable judgment was difplayed in bringing into order and harmony, into fobernefs, and, as it were,



L. GIBBARD sculp.

1780

TERENTIUS SAPIENS ET SATYRUS

into perfect nature, even the supernatural conceptions of his own great mind. How much he showed the dependence of one figure upon another, in the incident, or, as it might be called, the argument of his picture. The graceful union that pervades the whole, whilst every part is varied according to the character, interest, or circumstance that marks each individual scene.

In Raphael's Bible may be found examples of every possible



Adam and Eve in Paradise. From a Painting in the possession of Miss Rogers.

diversity of invention, or expression, in the highest order of composition. To point them out in detail, would require a volume; and it was Stothard's opinion that the young artist who, *by copying* is *compelled* to dwell upon them, would gradually learn to estimate their marvellous power, as by the improvement of his own taste and feeling, they would gradually unfold themselves to his conception. In Raphael there is nothing violent, nothing to strike with wonder

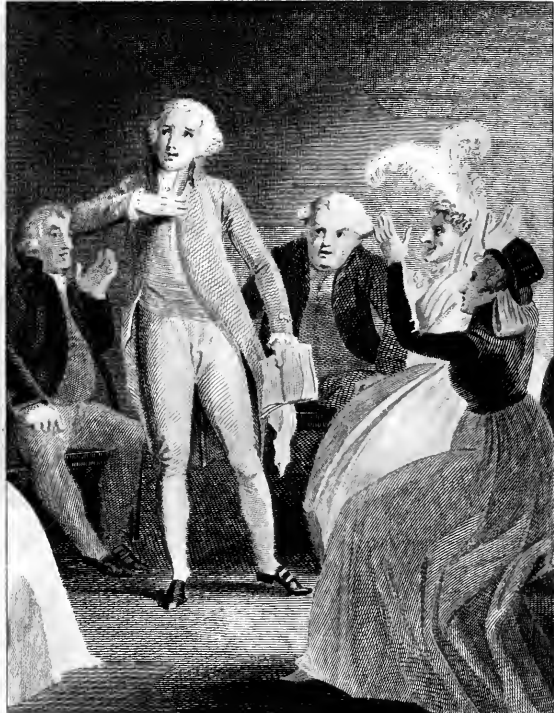
a common eye. In him art is so hidden by art, and nature so chosen in her most chaste and happy forms, that it requires a more than commonly educated eye to do full justice to his works. Like the poetry of Milton they are not food for the common mind. Raphael's draperies in his Bible, as indeed in all his productions, are thrown by the very hand of grace. No painter ever studied his draperies more than did this master. Stothard recommended a careful study of them, accompanied by the practice of sketching from real draperies. He preferred woollen clothes, such as cloaks are made of, for this purpose, the material being that which falls in folds, round, large and rich, not forming harsh or little broken angles and lines. In discoursing on the beauty of various draperies, he more particularly adverted to those of Albert Durer, of whom he was a great admirer. He said, that however graceful and flowing were the draperies of that master, they still preserved the truest indications of the anatomy of the human figure. He more particularly admired those seen in the cartoon by Raphael, where St. Paul is depicted preaching to the Athenians. The whole composition delighted him, and he would dwell on it with the warmest praise.

Nothing, indeed, can be more simple, nothing more natural, than the attitude and action of the Apostle. Yet what a majesty there is in that simplicity! What energy, what command, in the action of the figure!—Standing alone, erect, the central and arresting point of the whole group—the drapery of the Apostle, unbroken in the detail, marked but by a few long and full folds. When critically examined, every figure in the picture will be found to be dependent on the one prominent character of the piece. St. Paul's is the leading action of the painting; the rest the consequents. The deep attention that absorbs some of the auditory;





66



T. Stothard R.A. del.

A. Barrett sculp.

— while the flow'ry subject he pursues,
• A wild delirium round th' assembly flies;
Unusual lustre shoots from Emma's eyes;
• 'Lucurious' Tom drivels as he stands;
• And, Luna frisks, and Laura claps her hands.
Baviad line 60.

their air indicating that they are following up the connection of the argument which the Apostle addresses to them—these, so depicted, are men with whom the understanding bears the most sway. Others break the eagerness of their attention by a casual remark to their neighbours—they are seen in the attitude of speaking to each other. The old are deep and satisfied listeners; their own date of life assures them that their new-born hopes will soon become realized, as the Apostle's discourse opens to them a world beyond the grave. Another individual, from the force of conviction, raises his hands in the fervency of his feelings. This is one of those men with whom the heart sways more than the head. So admirable is this composition of Raphael, that there is not a single object in it but possesses force and meaning; whilst it is equal in sublimity, though not in supernatural effect, to the Transfiguration. I have in my possession, amongst several of Stothard's original and most beautiful drawings, his masterly copy in pen and ink, of one of the cartoons—"The Death of Ananias and Sapphira." This drawing was made by him in early life, and formed one of his many studies after the great Italian painter, whilst he was sedulously schooling himself and cultivating his own imagination with so much skill and care—an imagination which, in this country, has never yet had an equal in his own line of art, and possibly never will.

Stothard's "Angels appearing to the Shepherds," was a picture of the Raphael school; and ranks with the finest of his scriptural compositions. The repose of the sleeping figures, the astonishment of the shepherds, startled from their rest by the cloud of glory that unfolds itself before the angelic host, are altogether perfect; and the distinctive character of the earthly and the heavenly creatures is admirably expressed.

Stothard saw "The Transfiguration" at Paris, just before it was removed from the Louvre to be returned, with other portions of the stolen goods of that lawless plunderer, Bonaparte, to the right owner. An opinion went abroad, I know not how, even amongst some of the artists, that "The Transfiguration" had been re-touched, in parts re-painted, in comparatively modern times. I am glad, therefore, that I have it in my power to give so high an authority as that of Stothard in positive contradiction to an assertion so entirely false; for he repeatedly said that it was wholly unfounded. "The Transfiguration" remained to the time he saw it, as it came from the hand of Raphael. But, such was the dazzling brilliancy of the colouring which the painter had judiciously and purposely given to the *supernatural* part of the subject (where Moses and Elias appear to our Lord, who, with a brightness that no man could look on, was transfigured before them), that even to this day it remains gorgeous and fresh to such a degree that some of the connoisseurs, and even artists (who had not sufficiently considered the judgment evinced by Raphael in attempting the supernatural brilliancy above noticed), ran with the stream, and followed the common opinion, that such colouring could alone owe its vivacity to the re-painting of comparatively modern times. Harlowe, it is evident (and most highly did Stothard estimate that early-lost artist), had not at all succeeded in giving this brilliancy in his copy of the picture—the whole was too black, too heavy. But on this subject he shall speak for himself. Since the above was written, there was found among his papers a letter (penned soon after seeing "The Transfiguration" at the Louvre), and addressed to his lamented son, Charles, when the latter was engaged in his antiquarian pursuits in the North of England. It is probable that on

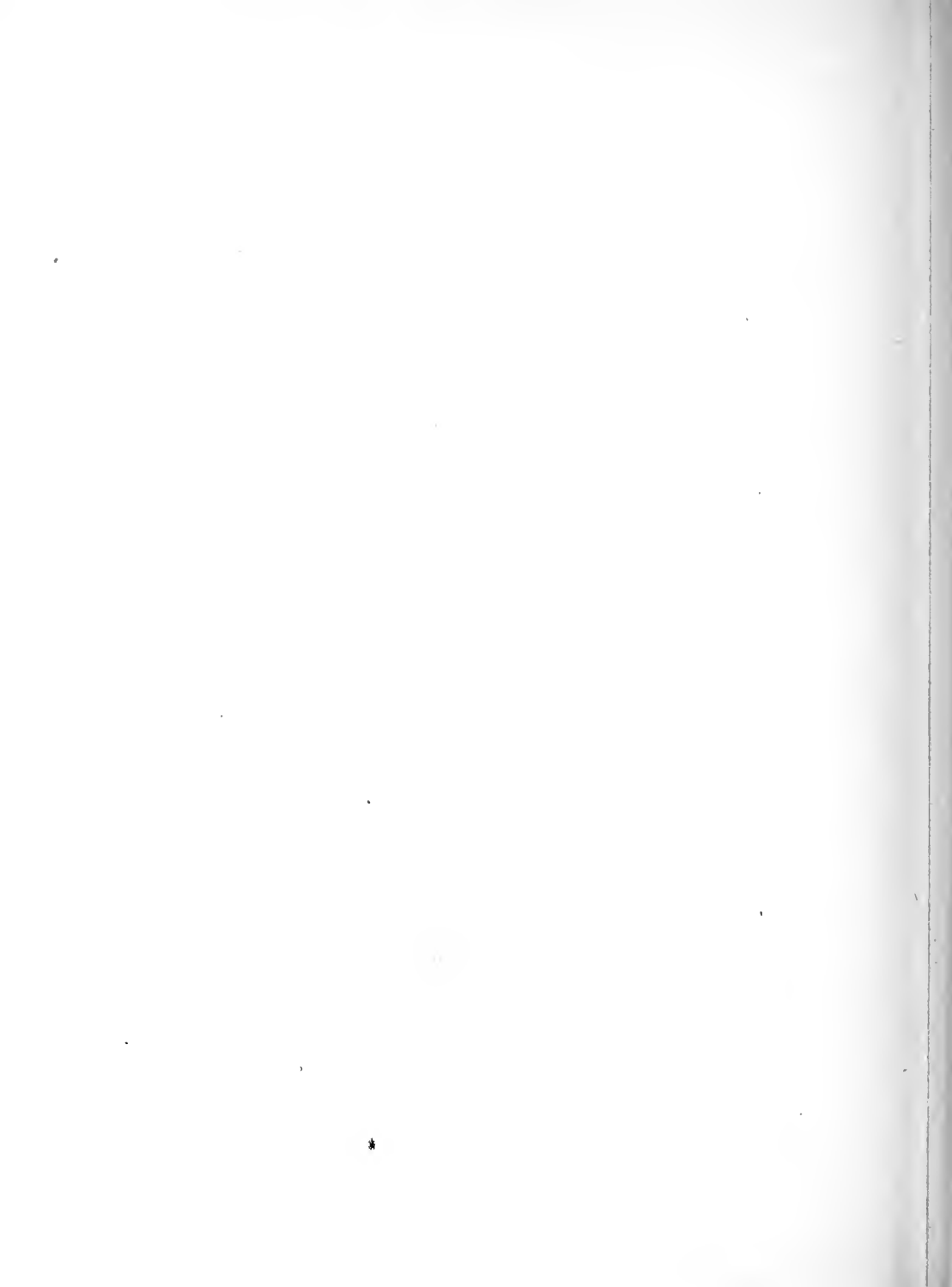


F. Schindler del.

C. A. scul.

Dep. Fortuacer by this Hand Zencua dies.

Zencua Act III. S. III



his coming home, Stothard might himself have wished to keep a letter which gave some brief account of his trip to France, and so



Angels appearing to the Shepherds.

have asked Charles to return it to him. This is the only way in which to account for its being found among his own, and not his son's papers.

“FOR C. A. STOTHARD, ESQ.,

“Post Office, Staindrop, Durham.

“DEAR CHARLES,

“I received your letter with your account of Lancaster, &c. About the same time Mr. Lyfons called to enquire if you were about returning. He sat with me some time, conversing on different subjects. Again he repeated his visit, when I was from home, and on the Continent as far as Paris. My journey was an unexpected one to me. Alexander, of the West India Docks, with Chantrey and others, making a party of six, excited me to accompany them. Accordingly we left home on Tuesday, the 5th of September, for Canterbury; next morning breakfasted at Dover, crossed over in three hours, with a fair wind; dined and slept at Calais; next night at Boulogne; left it early in the morning, and by noon reached Abbeville. Chantrey and I were so well pleased with the cathedral as to stop and sleep there, and employ the afternoon in drawing from this church, as the rest were viewing the town. Next morning resumed our journey for Amiens. Here apple-trees began to line the road, instead of hedges—for hedges we had seen none since we left England, but open corn-fields, occasionally interrupted by scattered hamlets, appearing like little woods, and in the distance terminating in long lines of wood for fuel (as they burn no coal), with here and there a windmill. This kind of scene may serve for every day's journey since we left Calais.

“When we had gained about two-thirds of our road towards Amiens, we crossed the Somme, the road continuing on its south bank all the way to Amiens. If we were pleased with the principal church at Abbeville, we were transported with that of Amiens: no





dilapidation, no whitewashing. I made here some drawings, particularly of the east end of the cathedral. We left it next morning early, breakfasting at Breteville. Began to see vineyards grace the landscape. Passed through Clermont, and reached Chantilly time enough to take an agreeable walk to view the stables, now entire; but the house and gardens are in ruins. This was the celebrated residence of the Prince of Condé, about twenty miles this side of Paris. After breakfast started again; passed through St. Denis, and entered Paris about noon; and by the Monday (being the sixth day from our leaving home) we were all pretty much sun-burnt, for every day the weather got finer, and from Calais to Paris we rode exposed to an unclouded sun." [Here there is a flight pen-and-ink sketch of the open carriage in which the party travelled.] "This was not one of the usual conveyances, but one we had the luck to meet with in London. A coachmaker had entrusted us with the care of it; an entirely new carriage, extremely light. Having it, gave us the opportunity of stopping where we liked. The coach was consigned to a person at the Hôtel Bruffels, in the Rue Richelieu, close to the Palais Royale. We found the accommodations of this place reasonable, and staid there while in Paris, which was a fortnight. Our plan for every day was to meet altogether at some restaurateur's at breakfast; there we settled at what time and place we were to dine. This generally left us at full liberty to divide our excursions as each felt inclined; it was three to one but we met again at the gallery of the Louvre. Here I met several persons I knew, as Daw, Lawrence, Westmacott, Davis, Lane (who I found was painting in the gallery), and several others, as G. Phillips, of Manchester, the Hon. Charles Long, &c.; but, above all, I was pleased with meeting

the French gentleman you frequently met in Westminster Abbey, and who dined at Mr. Biggs, at Brompton, in company with us. He inquired kindly after you. I, in return, acquainted him with your then expedition to the Roman Wall. I met him frequently; once in the palace of the Tuilleries, when the King was going to chapel. This was on the Sunday, at twelve o'clock; and, in the first room you enter, after ascending the great staircase — the same where the Swiss Guard were, in a manner, destroyed in the late revolution; the circumstance of seeing him there makes me conjecture he may hold some office near the King. He communicated some things not generally known as to the intentions of the allies respecting the removal of public monuments, which soon after took place.

“I was much gratified in seeing the spoils of the Vatican, that I might say, *These things I have seen*. But most of all, I was delighted with the assemblage of paintings to be viewed and compared with each other; the altar-pieces of Rubens, with his school, covered the most space, and made a splendid show; but ‘The Transfiguration,’ by Raphael, *surpassed every thing else*; the splendour of colouring far exceeded my expectation; it was splendid as a painted window, or as enamel-painting, yet not tawdry. Titian appears with advantage in his picture of ‘St. Peter the Martyr.’ I was gratified in viewing some of the acknowledged works of Correggio; above all, I must confess, I was well-instructed by viewing some Gothic pictures of no name, although their characteristic was excessive hardness, with the most violent opposition of splendid colours; a thing, to my thinking, they had in common with Raphael’s ‘Transfiguration.’ On the Monday of the second week I had been at Paris, they began to





J. Stothard R.A. pinx.

Anth. Cardon sculp.

*To whom, the whilts their sweet retreat beside,
In streams meandering flow'd in azure pride;
The listening Naiads.*

take down all the altar-pieces by Rubens, and whatever belonged to Flanders, Holland, and Germany. This afforded me an opportunity to inspect Rubens on the ground. On the Thursday of this second week, we made a day to visit Versailles and St. Cloud. On my return not a picture of Rubens remained on the walls of the Louvre. Visited the Palace of the Luxembourg; the Garden of Plants; and the national monuments. The day before I came away, which was Monday, spent in the Louvre making notes, and a copy, on a scrap of paper, of some part of 'The Transfiguration,' as a sample of its style of colouring; and as the Louvre began to have the appearance of an auction-room, I was impatient to return home. We left Paris on Tuesday morning five o'clock, in the Rouen diligence, through St. Denis and Pontoise: got to Rouen in the evening; stayed all the next day drawing churches and public buildings; and so delighted with it, wished to have stayed longer. On Thursday took leave of my company at eight in the morning, for Dieppe; dined there, and at sunset was out of the harbour; a south-east wind hardly sufficient to move our sails. Found it cool: pigged into my berth, to get warmth and rest. On waking in the morning, heard the chairs rattling about, and found myself off Brighton; it had blown a gale which had carried away our maintop-sail. Got home that evening by nine, and found all the family well. . . . This is all I have to communicate on business, notwithstanding, I have, I think, sent you a long letter: a Roland for your Oliver. I had almost forgot to say, that the delay of your last letter made me somewhat uneasy, and damped the pleasure I received on my return home; and, accidentally meeting one of the Bradleys, who inquired about you, telling me that your friend Kempe had not heard from you, made me entertain

disagreeable apprehensions for your safety; which increased daily till I received your last letter. You were wrong, Charles, to delay writing for so long a period. I am the more particular in mentioning this in hopes you will correct it in future, for your friends' sake, and those who love you. When you receive this, write to me that you have received it, for, on looking into the map, Staindrop is spelt differently. Believe me, your affectionate father,

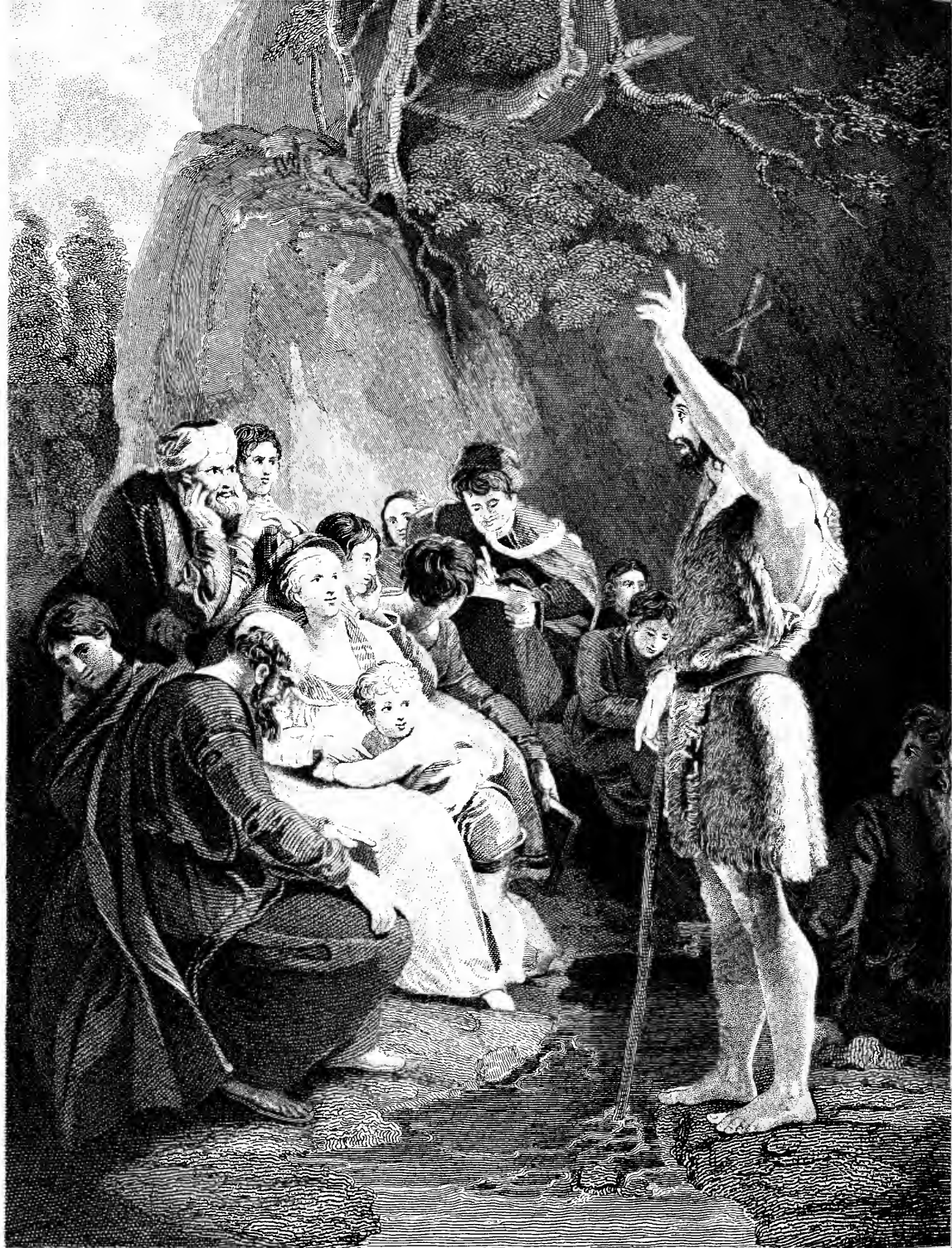
“THOS. STOTHARD.

“28, Newman Street, Oxford Street,

“Oct. 9th, 1815.”

Before I quit the subject of *The Transfiguration*, I cannot resist giving, as a further confirmation of Stothard's opinion of that marvellous work, a few lines extracted from some rude notes he left with a view to forming a Dictionary of the Lives of Painters. These notes were, I believe, the amusement of his leisure hours, in his latter years; they are in a very rough state, and imperfect: they seem principally to consist of the facts he had collected from printed books. Unfortunately, there are very few remarks of his own on Art, or on the genius of the several artists he mentions. But in giving a short notice of Raphael's birth, death, &c., he did not forget the impression made on his own mind by the sight of *The Transfiguration*, and says of it,—

“The last effort of this great artist is proof of the rapid improvement he made in his profession; and far excelled every former effort. How far, had Raphael continued and followed his profession, he would have extended it, must exceed conjecture, as no examples equal this production before or since. This picture



was removed by the French invaders of Italy to Paris, and placed in the Louvre, which I with admiration beheld in 1815, in September; when I was at Paris, and had the opportunity of



St. John Preaching in the Wilderness.

contemplating it, and comparing this performance when placed by the side of others, the finest and best examples of the Venetian and

the Flemish schools, over which it triumphed with a force and splendour of colour unequalled by any examples there exhibited. Thus it struck me at a time of life when the judgment acts more than the imagination.”

We see from these remarks how great was Stothard's admiration of the master he had so sedulously studied in early life; and as a further proof how much he was of a kindred spirit with Raphael, I need but refer to his St. John Preaching in the Wilderness. The simplicity, yet grandeur, with which the Baptist is depicted, as with a raised arm he points to Heaven, and energetically addresses the assembled multitude, is highly characteristic; whilst every figure in the group is appropriate, and replete with grace, beauty, and sentiment.



CHAPTER V.

Stothard's advice to students on drawing the figure—Belshazzar's Feast—Importance of outline—Gothic sculpture—Extracts from Stothard's notes on painting—His sketches from dancers—His admiration of Rubens; and of Sir Joshua Reynolds—Callcott—Turner—Barker and Harlowe—His opinions of high finish and perspective—His Fête Champêtre—Purchased by Lady Swinburn.

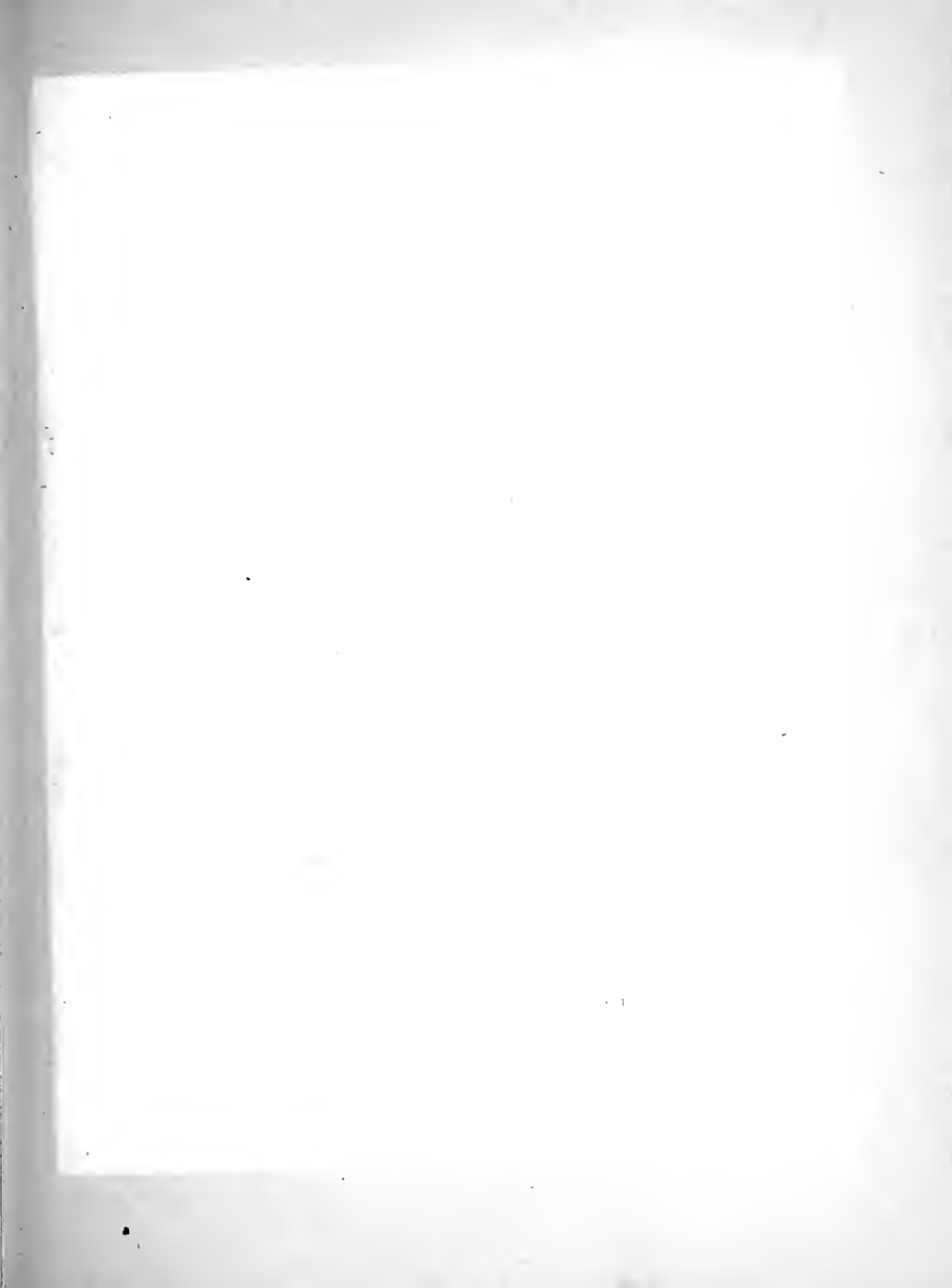
IN recording, as the recollections occur to me, Stothard's opinions, I am particular in dwelling on those which may be useful to the student of Art. I must not, therefore, omit how earnest he was in recommending a sedulous study of the antique sculpture to *all* young artists, for whatever branch of the art they might be designed. He deemed it absolutely necessary to learn to draw well, since, without good drawing, the finest conceived and coloured picture would but possess half its interest; for, in badly drawn figures, as in badly shaped limbs in a human being, there is always something of deformity, something not natural. Stothard indeed carried this admiration of good drawing very far. He went to see Martin's celebrated picture of Belshazzar's Feast, at the time all the town were engaged in admiring it. He praised the conception of it, as a whole, and especially the grandeur conveyed by the supernatural light from the writing on the wall, making pale and dim all the earthly lights, even the fires kindled to Moloch in the sacrifice. Yet, whilst doing the fullest justice to the genius of Martin, he soon turned away from the picture, with

the remark, "The bad drawing of the figures hurts my eye; it is difagreeable."

He considered that merely drawing the figure from the living subject at the Academy was not enough; the student who does so, without being prepared by previous study from the antique, will be apt to depict nature too much after the Dutch school, in vulgar or common forms, wanting that poetic grace and beauty in which the Greek sculptors exceeded all others, of any age or country. Indeed, he used to say, that he thought bad drawing in a good artist, inexcusable; because it was a proof that he had neglected what was, in a very great degree, a mechanical part of the art, and one, that with proper attention could be so certainly acquired.

On the importance of outline he remarks (in a fragment of one of his letters):—"I am led to apprehend, you think an outline an inferior effort, requiring less care than a finished picture. Outlines are not the trifles the public generally conceive them to be; they have no shadows wherein to hide their defects, or fine colours to compensate for the want of energy, which ought to be the prime quality of outline; and, if well done, will never be without it. Shadows and colours can only give substance to what outline can alone produce."

Stothard had himself practised what he deemed so essential in others. His own early studies from the antique were bold, accurate, and masterly. I have in my possession some drawings he made, also when very young. They are mostly studies from Nature, on a small scale; one of them a hand, and various animals and birds are executed with the most beautiful *finis*. I mention this more particularly, because, from the sketchy manner in which





Steward del.

Beath sculp.

he left even several of his most masterly pictures, it has been said by some that he could not finish! This is not true. But the multitude—amounting to many thousand designs—of drawings and paintings, that he made in the course of his most laborious life, would not allow him to devote that time on his works which a very high finish of them would have required.

He thought the study of Gothic antiquity likewise useful, and was an admirer of many of the works of the Middle Ages. He considered that several of the Monumental Effigies of Great Britain (a fine work on which, was most originally conceived and executed by his son Charles) were examples of a pure and beautiful style of art. Amongst these he particularly noticed the effigy of Eleanor, the wife of Edward I., in Westminster Abbey; and John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, in the same church; of the last he made a drawing. Some of the paintings of the Middle Ages, he considered possessed great merit. There is frequently seen in them so much of nature; the draperies are good, the finish high; though the total want of knowledge in perspective, and in the chiaroscuro, showed an uneducated state of the art; their accuracy was also commendable—you could rely on the truth of their portraits of individuals or things. They did not represent their princes and heroes in masquerade; there were none of those incongruities which became the fashion two or three centuries after; there were no French kings, like the statues of Louis XIV., attired in Roman armour, and finished with the costume of his own day, a full-bottomed wig. Yet am I convinced, from the knowledge of Stothard's feelings in Art, that he would have greatly disliked the present growing fashion among some of our young artists, of imitating the hard style and quaint attitudes



and devices of the Gothic ages. Such, with Sir Hugh Evans, he would have deemed to be "affectations," and would more especially have noticed how happily these imitators caught the faults, but without being equally lucky in catching the beauties, of the Gothic school. Stothard, indeed, detested all *conceits in Art*.





Stothard del.

Ang. 1840 sc.

THEY MEAN

Am. 1840

That Stothard gave strict attention to the correctness of costume, we have instances even from an early period of his designs; whilst so great was his feeling for grace, that he contrived to make even the dresses of the date of George the Second tasteful and elegant: as we may see in many of his drawings for the *Novelist's Magazine*; and more especially in those exquisitely beautiful designs for *Clarissa Harlowe*.

Since these remarks were written, I have seen the rough notes, before mentioned, made by Stothard, with a view to form a *Dictionary of the Lives of the Painters*. Among them were a few which seem to have been intended for a portion of a preface. These are in so rough and crude a state (in parts difficult to be understood) that to give them to the press as they are, would be unjust to his memory; as, no doubt, had he lived to finish them, he would have thrown them into a clearer and better shape. Yet it would be a pity that the slightest observation of such a man, on the art in which he so excelled as to render his name an honour to the country, should be wholly lost. I have, therefore, after reading them with great attention, gleaned from them the following observations, of which I give the substance only, and regret I can do no more.

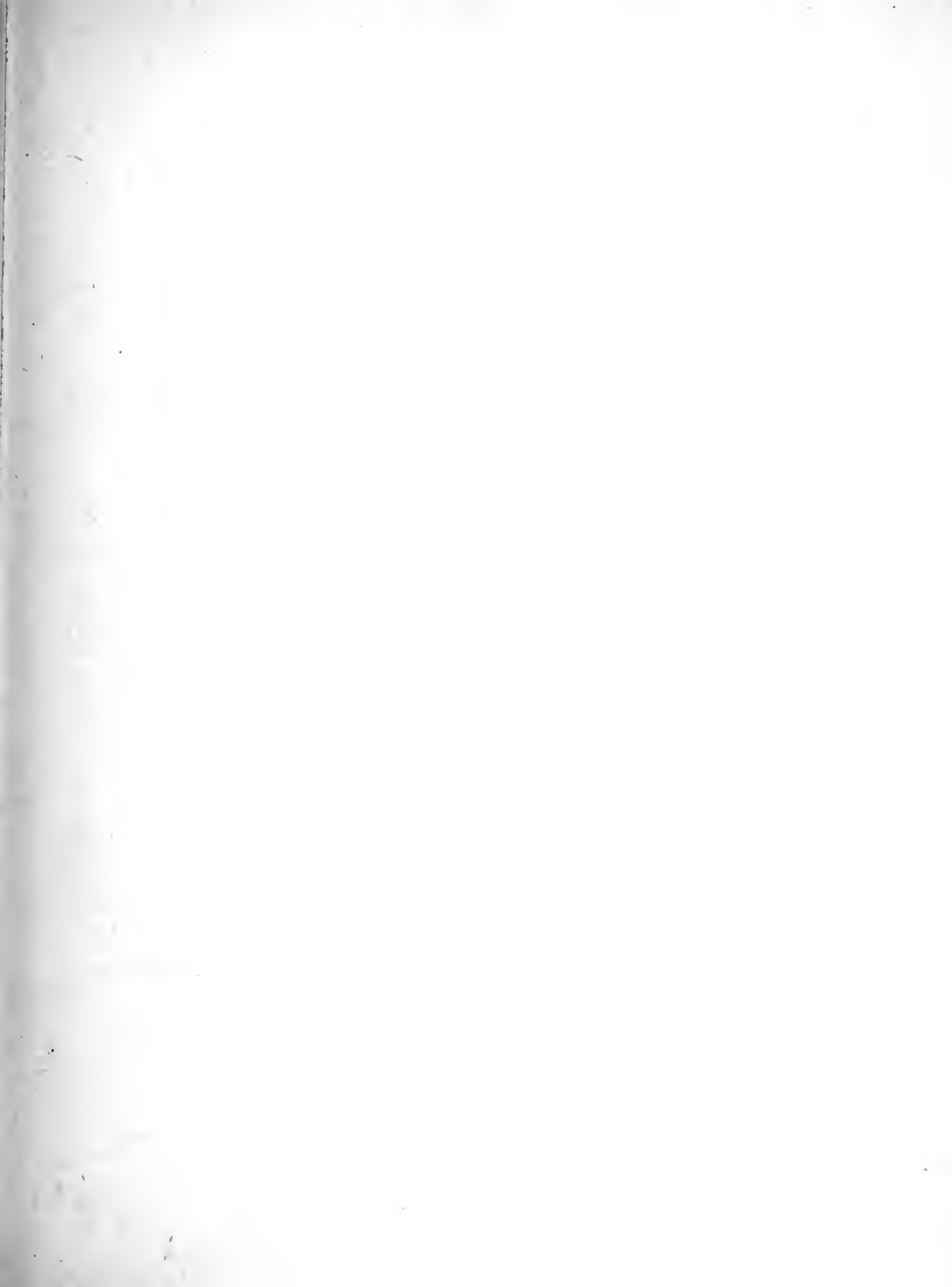
“The history of the artist and his works must begin towards the latter end of the twelfth century. Greek artists were the sole practitioners. These were employed in the various states of Italy, and were, from time to time, invited there in companies from Greece, to ornament and cover the interior of churches with *Madonnas*, *Angels*, and *Apostles*. In these paintings every variety of colour, gilding, and raised work was introduced, to make a showy appearance; and thus to contribute to architectural embellishment.

“The frequent representation of the twelve Apostles occasioned a necessity for distinguishing them. Individuality of character was, therefore, strictly to be observed; so that the spectator might at once know the saint's name from his physiognomy and appearance. This distinctive character in representing the Apostles, by the early Greek painters, was afterwards less observed even in the time of Raphael.

“Formerly, painting was the only means by which the memory of past events was frequently recorded and preserved for the benefit of future generations; and when we consider the absence of all literary information, what can be more impressive than by means of pictorial representation (such as on the walls of the Campo Santo, at Pisa,) to afford for religious contemplation a succession of subjects from Scripture, thus given in a language requiring little instruction; indeed in one that even a child may read and understand.

“For the information of a people, during this dark period in Art, little skill was required on the part of the artist; enough was accomplished, if he conceived he had not fallen into the rear of his contemporaries; and the people were satisfied if the subject was understood, and cared not for excellence in Art; they expected to see no more than the narrative clearly represented, and the subject alone consecrated the picture; and thus far only did their conception of Art extend, or did they concern themselves about it.

“Of the times of still more remote antiquity little was known or remembered concerning pictorial Art, for bigotry and ignorance had combined to destroy all the paintings of the Heathen world; and no example of Grecian painting remained. Sculpture was an exception; as the examples in this branch of Art were then more





T. Richard P.A. del.

W. Ensam sc.

MYSTON

ME. TWO PARAVENUES

common in Greece and Italy than in the present time: witness those remains once at Athens, and now preserved in the British Museum; and but for the employment of an improper agent would have been increased. Besides these, the triumphal arch of Trajan, the column of Antoninus, with other examples, were preserved. But these were realities, and not deceptions, like painting; where the artist relieves and rounds a figure, from a flat surface, as the ancients had done, by the magic of light and shade. But such examples in pictorial art were no more to be seen, and the painter had to begin again; and the taste of the public went with him hand and hand. He laboured for them, and he was cautious not to venture beyond what they were able to conceive or understand.

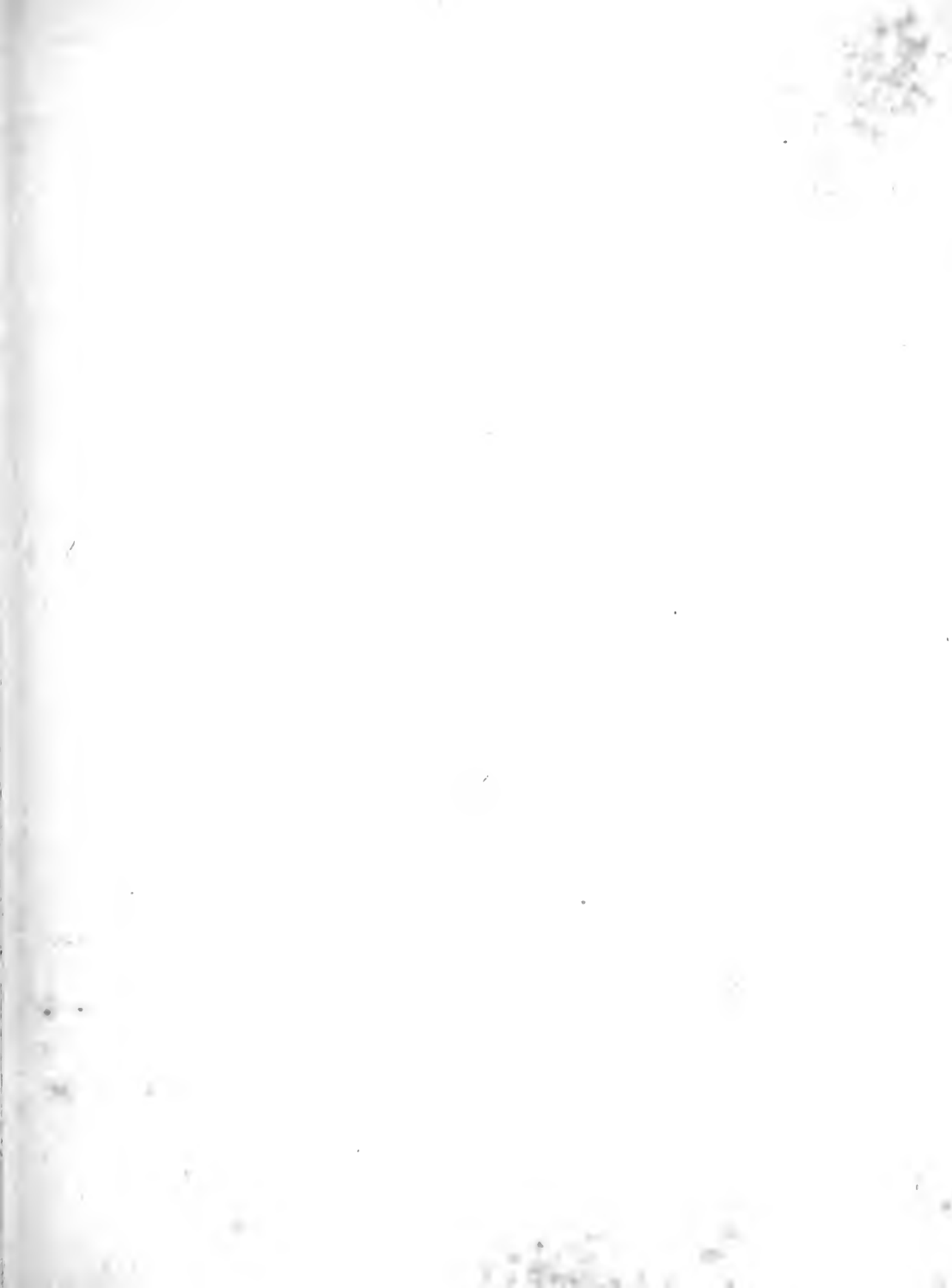
“Our history of painting commences in the dark ages, when Florence, Pisa, Sienna, &c., flourished as republics, independent of each other. The arts were then in the hands of itinerant Greeks; but how long they had continued to practise prior to this time is unknown. Their works remaining to us exhibit nothing beyond the first efforts of art; a hard decided outline, with gaudy colours.

“At Florence, in the Laurentian Library, the oldest MS. there preserved was a Virgil, supposed to have been written in the time of Valens and corrected by the Consul Asterius, in the fifth century. This is now lost; disappearing during the French revolution; and the rest of the MS. paintings are Greek and Italian of the eleventh century, and are more legible than preceding MSS. Forsyth had the curiosity zealously to examine them in his travels through Italy. In these, he tells us, he saw nothing to admire, but the brightness of the colours; a thing common to paintings

which have no shadowing. Some of these are by Oderisi, whom Dante praises as the honour of the arts.

“The first attempt in Art is lineal or outline, and is practised instinctively by all nations, even in their rudest state; colour succeeds to embellish and give a splendid appearance: this is exemplified by the Persians, the Hindoos, the Chinese, and the Japanese, and by every other nation in its early state; even rude as are the Mexicans. The addition of splendid colour is only for embellishment, and gives nothing more. The sentiment, the expression, can only be acquired by the aid of perspective, and without this, outline must ever remain inanimate; but the union of perspective with outline is seldom, if ever, attained, in nations which, like the Chinese, retain merely the early stage of Art; it is ever preceded by colour of a showy appearance.”

So great a lover was Stothard of accuracy, that he used to say he disliked a picture that professed to be a view, or a portrait, if it told a lie. And this attention to accuracy and the simplicity of form at the commencement of study, he deemed the best mode of avoiding affectation; whilst a study of good models (such as those of antique sculpture and the works of Raphael) would be certain to accustom the mind to a purity of style and a feeling of grace that would never afterwards desert it. He exemplified this by referring to an artist of his acquaintance. “Mr. ——,” he said, “has as much genius as any man I know, yet he never painted a single historical figure that was natural. His portraits are the same; they are Mr. ——’s portraits, not those of his sitters. All his faults arise from affectation. His imagination has run wild, from never having been chastened and well directed by the early study of good masters. He has a certain set of





JAMES HALL, ESQ. F.R.S. &c.

LATE MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ARTS.

From an Original Drawing by THOMAS STOTHARD ESQ. R.A.

By Robert S. Longman & Co. Printers, 15, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

ideas, too, about colour ; and these he has repeated so often, till he actually *sees wrong* ; yet is Mr. —— a man of genius, but, for want of a proper education in Art, it is my opinion he will never produce one good picture.”

I must not omit the mention of a circumstance which will serve to show how greatly, in the action of the human figure, was grace studied by Stothard, wherever it could be found. In the earlier part of his life, he was much in the habit of frequenting the opera,



Bacchanalian sketch. Drawn on wood by the late Mr. Stothard, and recently engraved by J. Thompson.

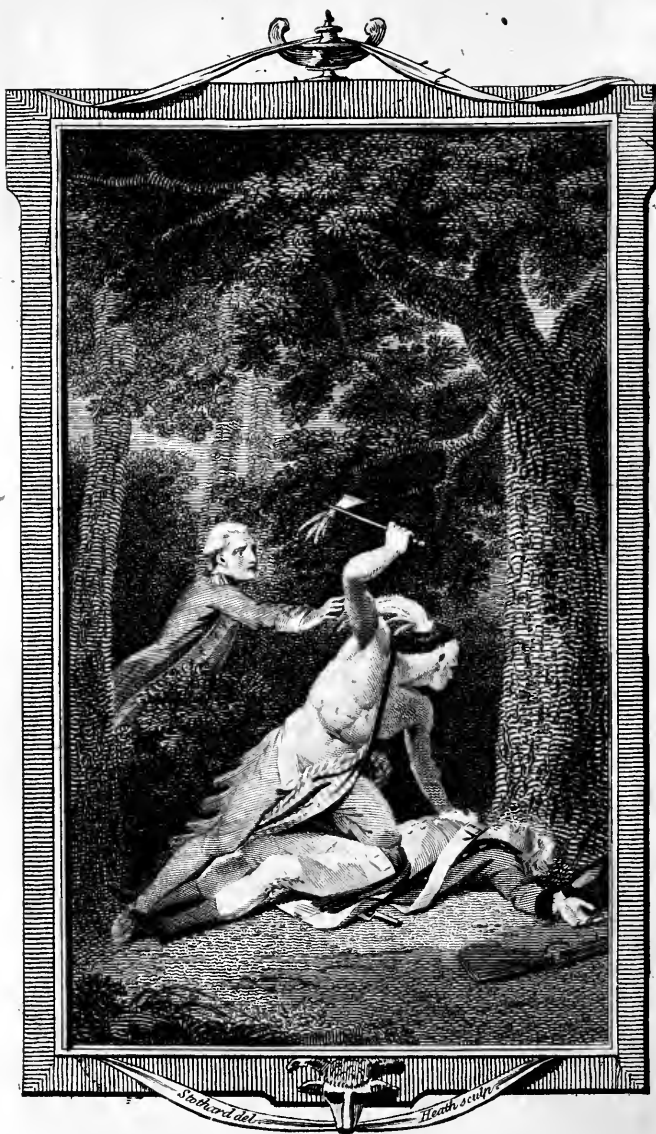
on purpose to make sketches of Monsieur and Madame De Hays —dancers whose grace, he said, was inimitable. He had never seen anything like it in dancing. It was the grace of antique sculpture thrown into action. Slight and rapid as were the sketches he thus made, he considered them of great value, as hints for design.

Highly as Stothard estimated the colouring of the old masters (and no man was ever more deeply imbued with their spirit),

Rubens was his chief favourite for colour. He considered him likewise as the finest painter of the horse. There is so much *action* in the horses of that great artist; they are living, moving creatures—not statues; nor do they appear as if they had been copied from animals led out from the stable, and standing to be painted—the common fault with many, even the best, horse painters. The richness of Rubens as a colourist, he thought, surpassed every other master in ancient or modern times. His pictures, indeed, glow with power; yet are they so finely harmonised, that they never appear gaudy; no colour in them, however bright, stares upon you; and it is only by turning to other finely painted pictures, that you are made fully conscious of his surpassing and wonderful richness—a richness entirely sobered and blended into a due equality with every part, even in his most gorgeous works. His pencilling also is fine; he is now and then careless in his drawing; and in *form* he drew his ideas of beauty too much from the Flemish school. In this respect many of his female figures want delicacy; they are often gross in their proportions, and convey, therefore, ideas of voluptuousness. Unquestionably in form, delicacy, and grace, Rubens could not approach Raphael. The women of the latter were never meretricious. He was quite a Catholic painter: all his Virgins and Holy Families, and indeed all his women, convey the most refined ideas of feminine tenderness and purity. Raphael was the painter for the church, Rubens for the palace and the banquet.

Stothard's partiality for richness of colour made him a warm admirer of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He said that the inequalities of Reynolds—some pictures retaining their colour with all its brilliancy, whilst in others it was faded or gone, or partially so,





CAPTAIN WINTERFIELD.

even in several of his best works—arose from Sir Joshua's having unfortunately a fondness for experiments in compounding and preparing his own colours; so that he indulged in many tricks, and frequently employed materials in painting (wax, for instance,) that would not stand exposure to the effects of time, and light, and air. The portrait of Mrs. Hartley, that exquisitely beautiful woman (an actress in the days of Palmer and Garrick), where she is represented as a Bacchante crowned with vine-leaves, may be considered as one of the richest portraits for colour that modern times have produced. Stothard was delighted when all the works of Sir Joshua were brought together and exhibited, above twenty years ago, at the British Institution in Pall Mall.

He was very sincere in his praise of his contemporaries; he spoke as he felt, without any personal feeling respecting their works. Some of the landscape artists of his day were the frequent theme of his praise. Callcott, for instance, he greatly admired; and several of the earlier paintings of Turner, he said, wanted only the mellowing effects of time to be equal to Claude. I recollect his saying this of one picture in particular; I forget what it was called, but it was, I believe, exhibited at Somerset House. I shall not here attempt to enumerate all the artists of his own day, of whom I have heard him speak in terms of praise, except it be to mention his great estimation of Robson, whom he considered the most poetical of all the water-colour painters.

Of Barker, the earliest painter of the panorama, Stothard spoke in terms of the highest praise. He more especially admired his views of Elba, Athens, and the Bay of Lisbon. The effect of the evening sun, and the aerial tints in the "Elba" he thought truly astonishing; and never had the magnificence of ocean been so

depicted as in the "Lisbon;" the action of the waves which furrounded the spectator (who was supposed to be on shipboard) was wonderful; and of "Athens" there could not be made a finer picture. Stothard deemed it a national loss that these efforts of the genius of Barker were not preserved by the country.

Of Harlowe (who died so early that he may be said to have quitted life almost at the age many young men begin their career in Art) I have heard Charles Stothard frequently declare that it was his, as well as his father's opinion, had that extraordinary genius been spared, he would have become one of the first portrait-painters that this country had ever produced. Harlowe's age considered, what he did was truly wonderful. He possessed the very rare talent of combining the conception and the arrangement of the historical with all the qualities requisite for the finished portrait-painter, without the slightest sacrifice of fidelity to his imagination. His eye for colour was excellent, and he could be as graceful as an old master of the Italian school; nor did he want simplicity—witness the portraits he painted of the Misses Sharp, small size, at the time they were so celebrated as youthful performers on the harp, in the musical world of London.

Stothard's praise of contemporary talent was not confined to those who followed the Arts as a profession. He took a great interest in looking at the sketches of private persons. I have seen him dwell over the pages of the sketch-book of a friend, with an attention that would have been refused to it by a more ordinary mind.*

* To show the interest he felt in talent for drawing wherever found, I cannot avoid mentioning the following circumstances:—A nursery-maid to some of my brother's children, whose name was Sophia, had so strong a natural talent for design that she would get pen-and-ink, a pencil (or even burn pieces of wood in the fire if she could





T. Stothard del. R.A.

J. Neagle fecit.

————— Pale around are seen
 All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds
 Her bleeding soldiers, Brandishing her sword
 To them she points, to heres thus she speaks

But his was ever observant; always collecting and storing images and ideas, so that the slightest sketches of scenery conveyed to him either actual knowledge or food for reflection. He took a more particular interest in looking over sketches of foreign scenery, &c.; and, amongst others, executed by private persons, I remember he mentioned the drawings of Lady Callcott (late Maria Graham, the authoress,) and Mr. Nesfield, of the Royal Engineers, as having afforded him very great pleasure. He spoke of both in terms of most sincere commendation.

An instance of his kindness to young artists of merit must here be told. One day he met the elder Lewis,* when his son (since known as "the Spanish Lewis"), then a very young man, had exhibited at the Royal Academy his picture of *The Monkey at the Glass*. Mr. Stothard congratulated the father, and told him that on first seeing it he thought his son's picture was by Landseer; and that it was so beautifully and delicately painted, it was worthy the good situation in which it had been hung in the Great Room. In lately adverting to the circumstance, which Mr. Lewis always remembers with grateful feelings, he remarked that Stothard was an amiable and highly-gifted man, far above flattery; that what he had

get nothing better), to draw with. Her sketches were the conceptions of her own mind, sometimes from what she had read or had seen. The late amiable Henry, a son of Stothard, took some of these sketches to his father. The great historical painter looked at them with the deepest interest, and declared they evinced genius of a surprising order. Nothing could exceed his astonishment when told by whom they were produced. The poor girl soon after went

to America. I was told she used to say that she would give all the world to learn to draw properly, and to devote her attention to it for a livelihood. She was in every respect a most deserving character.

* The elder Lewis is known to the public at large for his engravings; but those well acquainted with the West of England feel that his drawings from Devonshire scenery, in truth of character and beautiful effect, are unique in their class.

said was exactly the result of his own convictions, and he felt it proper to express them to the father of a rising young artist of talent.

Stothard was always ready to receive with the utmost kindness and patience any suggestions of his friends, and to listen to them with good nature, even when they were wholly opposite to his own views. Of this the following is a very interesting proof. He was told by some one that it was the opinion of many, he did not finish his pictures sufficiently to satisfy the prevailing taste. On hearing this, he replied he would give a picture that should be more finished, but added, there was a lamentable want of feeling with the public, in respect to his ideas of Art. "I study nature," said he; "she is the best guide. There is a perspective both in colour, and light, and shade, as well as form, that is not sufficiently studied by the generality. In the present day, although an object be at a distance, it must be made distinct; this is called Art, but I call it a very vitiated taste. This accounts for much of that hardness and rigidity of style now so often seen; and for that prettiness which is no other than miniature painting in oil. There are some students at the Academy who will sit down to a hand or a foot and work over it for a month or six weeks. That is not what I consider a study of the antique, but a waste of time; a labour by mechanical effect to produce a high finish. I know that when the drawings of the students are brought before the council, Sir Thomas Lawrence very closely examines the extremities of the limbs. But let them study well the outline of the figure, under its varied characters by position, and they will become familiar with form. And as to light and shadow, let them take a ball for a model, and it will teach them light, shadow, and half-tint to perfection."

The picture he produced, in accordance with the promise thus





given, was his celebrated *Fête Champêtre*; the dimensions were about five feet by four feet. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy and greatly admired; but was considered not to have sold, in consequence of the old and ugly frame in which it was hung up. The price placed on the painting was three hundred guineas. Such a price was very unusual with Stothard; although had the sum been doubled, it would not have been considered much in comparison with the demands of many of his contemporaries. Judging by the customary very moderate terms of Stothard, more than by the merit of his works, an amateur baronet, who came to look at the picture with a view to purchase, was absolutely frightened at the price. A lady of true taste and spirit in her patronage of the Fine Arts, judged, however, very differently of its value.

Sir John and Lady Swinburne had long been known amongst their most intimate friends as an example of conjugal attachment, observing towards each other throughout life, not only the most warm affection, but much of that attention and delicate courtesy which is too commonly confined to the hours of courtship alone. They always kept their wedding-day; and as both were fond of the arts, and had a very fine gallery of paintings, it was their custom to mark the return of the happy day by adding a picture to their collection. The anniversary was once more near at hand, and Lady Swinburne determined that she would on the approaching festival surprise Sir John, by a gift that should be purely one of her own choice. She had a just sense of Stothard's merits, and accordingly drove to his house and requested an interview.

She was ushered into the drawing-room, where stood the *Fête Champêtre*. The picture instantly struck her — so bright, so beautiful, such a joyous aspect about the whole, yet so mingled with

repose ; in those long green avenues, where (whilst some of the company were seen basking in the warm air of the sunny foreground) the lovers, and the young, and the lovely, were seen gliding beneath their embowering shade—a picture of love, and festal joy ! what could be more appropriate ? Lady Swinburne paid the three hundred guineas without a remark, except one of satisfaction, bade a kindly adieu to the venerable painter, got the picture conveyed into her carriage, and so well contrived was her plan, that Sir John neither knew of the purchase, nor that it had been removed to his house. The wedding-day came ; the table was spread, the festive party assembled—dinner was ended, and the usual health and good wishes to the promoters of the feast heartily pledged by the numerous friends and guests, when Lady Swinburne invited Sir John to accompany her to the gallery, followed by all present : and there with triumphant delight did she lead him to the Fête Champêtre, the beautiful work of Stothard, and requested he would accept it as a precious addition to his gallery, and as a memorial of the day.



McClure del.

Angus sculp.

CHAPTER VI.

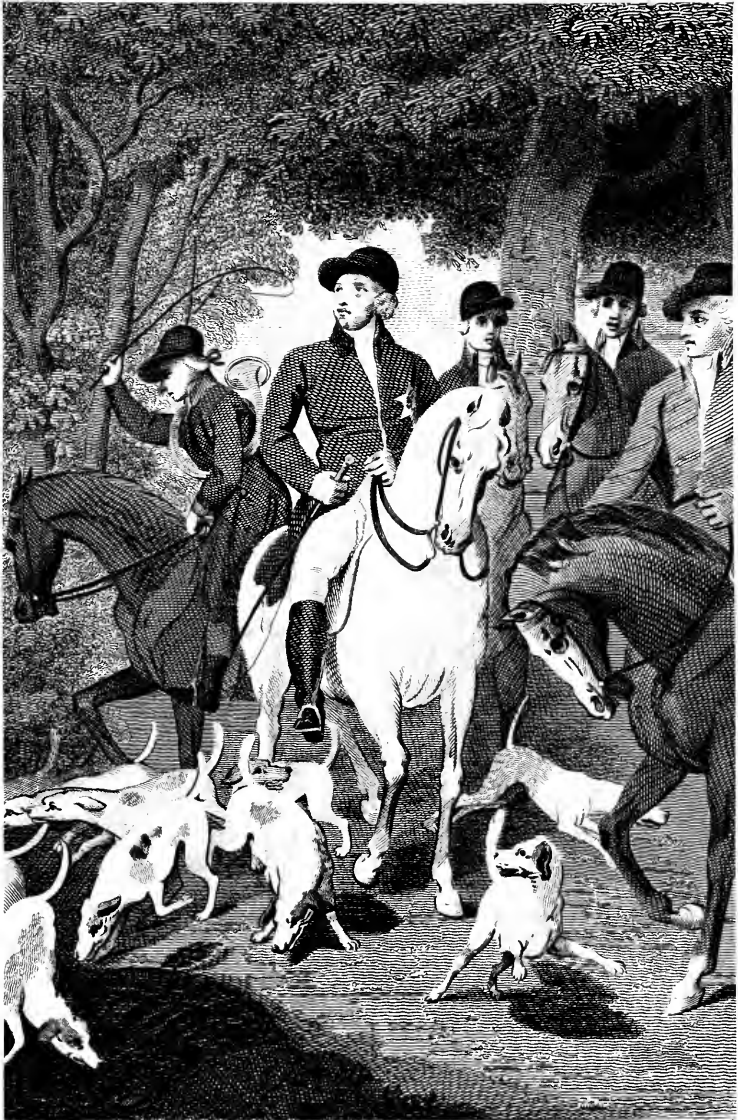
Stothard's mind contemplative—His opinions of beauty—Remarks on expression—Mrs. Fitzherbert and Mrs. Siddons—His drawing of the latter—Flaxman's cast of her face—Stothard's want of popularity—whence it arose—Sir Joshua's remark on the genius of Stothard—His study of Raphael—Similarity and imitation—His pictures in the school of Watteau—His Sans Souci.

STOTHARD'S mind was of a contemplative order. There was not a subject, either in real life, or in written record, to which he turned his attention, without thinking upon it deliberately and originally. All his opinions were those of a dispassionate and enquiring spirit. But it is such as are more immediately connected with his own pursuits, that it is the object of these pages to preserve from oblivion. His opinions of beauty, therefore, must not be forgotten, and they were not of the common order of thinking, for his ideas on the subject embraced a much larger extent than is usually acknowledged as belonging to it. "I see more beauty," would he say, "in faces that are looked upon by others as having no claim to it, than most persons would suspect." Stothard considered that the highest order of beauty in a human face is derived solely from its expression. Plato said that the emotions produced by beauty on the mind, arose from a remembrance of supreme perfection. He probably said this in connection with the spirit or soul, because it is that which animates the countenance.

Regular features and beauty of complexion, will not alone awaken interest ; there must be something more. The mind must give that action to the countenance which we call *expression* ; yet mere beauty to please the eye, without interesting the feelings, is common enough. On being asked, in what he considered the more common order of beauty to consist ? He replied, In youth and health ; where those are found, unless there is a great perversity of nature to render the features really disagreeable, there can hardly be other than some claims to beauty ; for there is a great deal of grace in nature. "I see it," would he say, "in everything."

This is a most just observation of Stothard, and the painter who has studied beauty in all its details, as well as in its more striking forms, sees its existence where a common eye would never trace it ; like the practised eye of the mariner, who can detect the distant sail which is totally obscured to the landsman who turns his gaze in the same direction. That a lover sees beauty in a mistress which no one else can find out, though a remark generally accompanied with a smile, has nothing absurd in it, she must have qualities which please and interest *him*, or he would not love her. Those qualities convey character, or give expression to her countenance ; and, by the association of his own ideas, that very expression renders her more agreeable to him than to any other person. She possesses what he likes and admires. He feels she does so, without analysing his own heart minutely to discover wherefore ; she is really beautiful to him, therefore, though she may not be at all so to others, who neither value such qualities in her, nor can call them forth, nor can respond to the expression of them, as he does ; for, the great mystery of love, after all, is very simple—the sympathy in being loved proving irresistible. To





HIS MAJESTY
going out with his Stag Hounds on Windsor Forest

meet with one who understands our heart, and loves us, for what it finds in it, will win almost every heart, not previously devoted to another ; and will, in our eyes, give beauty to the homely face, grace to the simplest action, and convey even an interest to those years which have passed the date of youth.



The Sunflower and the Ivy. Engraved about 1793.

Hence arise all the anomalies, the wonders, and the strange chances of that heart-hallowing affection—love.

As I once conversed with Stothard about certain celebrated Beauties, he said many who were esteemed such, did not strike him ; because they wanted an expression of sense and feeling—their countenances were like blank books, very fair, but nothing to be read in them. He liked a face that had matter in it—that promised a rich mind or

a warm heart. He neither liked a foolish woman nor a cold-hearted woman. The last, indeed, is ever repulsive—something contrary to what Nature intended should be the principal distinction of her sex ; for we look for love and tenderness in a woman, as we do for warmth in the sun. In other respects, Stothard, though he preferred the elegance and grace of Raphael's female figures to the portly dames of Rubens, so far agreed with the Flemish painter as to think stoutness an advantage to beauty, unless in the very prime of youth. Indeed, nothing impairs beauty so much, and nothing shows age so soon, as *leanness*. A very thin face may retain all its expression, if there is mind in the person ; but thinness conveys an idea of ill-health, wasting, and suffering, and that always gives pain. In the countenance of a sneerer, *leanness* in a great degree becomes hideous. Look at the portraits of Voltaire !

When speaking of beauty of the uncommon cast, he said that the two greatest beauties he had ever seen were the celebrated Mrs. Fitzherbert and Mrs. Siddons. The former, even late in life, was dazzling in her attractions ; Mrs. Siddons in person was commanding, yet of such exceeding delicacy when young, her beauty was much greater off the stage than on it. Stothard said that he had made a drawing of her soon after she became so distinguished in London. Till he went to her to make his drawing, he had seen her only on the stage, and was surprised to find how infinitely more beautiful she was in a private room than at the theatre ; but she had the finest union of feature, grace, and expression he had ever seen. He thought, as did all who knew her in private life, that there was a great deal of worth in Mrs. Siddons. Her own mind was truly noble, and there can be no doubt that made her acting so. She was exceedingly modest, not prudish in her manners and conversation ;





grave and dignified, because dignity was the character of her mind and of her person. Those who could not understand her, and seldom saw such natural majesty in any one, set it down for theatrical; many, therefore, said she was always an actress, off as well as on the stage. But it would have been as out of character in her to have formed her manners by those of the ordinary rate of persons, as it would be in a very tall woman to walk stooping, in order to bring herself down to the ordinary stature of her sex.

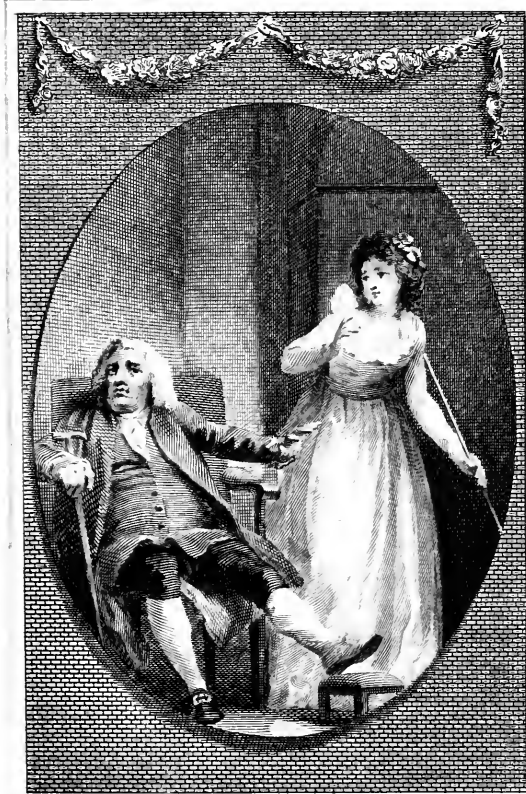
Stothard remembered being very much pleased with an instance of the good-feeling of Mrs. Siddons for her brother John. Kemble played (I believe it was his first night in London) the character of *Hamlet* at the Haymarket Theatre. Stothard sat near her box, and declared that he should never forget her anxiety, amounting even to agitation, for his success; yet many said she was of a cold disposition. This could not be true; and here her generally calm demeanour was again misunderstood and miscalled. Mrs. Siddons had a fine taste for works of Art. She modelled; and the subjects that in painting and in sculpture interested her the most, were always those of grandeur. She had nothing that was common about her, yet she was entirely free from affectation. Nature made dignity her sphere, and she was content to be natural. No one could have entertained a light thought in the presence of Mrs. Siddons.

I observed to Stothard that she always appeared to me to be the finest possible subject for a statue; that I should prefer a statue of her to any painting, yet I had seen none—a bust of her was not enough to convey a full idea of her surpassing majesty. Stothard was pleased with the observation; and when, some little time after, we went in a party from the house of the painter to see Flaxman's

studio, we there saw a very fine plaster cast of Mrs. Siddons, that had been taken from her face.

When a man of great merit has been long overlooked, and comes at last to be noticed, you hear the world wonder how he could have remained so long obscured. I have heard this observation often applied to Stothard, since his popularity has been becoming as extensive as it deserves to be. For my own part, I see nothing surprising in it. Many were the circumstances which, when combined, were quite sufficient to prevent immediate popularity. One of the greatest was, that Stothard never gave himself the trouble to shine at Somerset House in a way so as to arrest public attention. He very rarely painted a moderately large picture; a *very* large one, on a scale such as I have seen by Rubens, at Antwerp, I believe he never did attempt; yet that he possessed the power to do so, and in a most masterly manner, is proved by his noble and almost colossal paintings on the staircase of Burleigh House.

The public, in order duly to appreciate an artist at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, require to have something imposing before their eyes—something which, either from size, subject, or colour, compels them to see it. It is well known that artists who make the greatest figure there, paint their pictures, generally speaking, expressly for the place; and, in order to arrest attention, I have heard many of them say that they are “obliged to paint up to the Exhibition tone,” not from choice, but necessity, else would their pictures be at once overpowered (*killed* is the artist’s term) by the host of staring, gaudy subjects that hang around, and come in immediate contact with a sober-coloured and natural painting. Stothard, even to gain popularity, never would condescend to paint up



Sutherland del.

Hath sculp.

to the tone of the Exhibition. So much was he opposed to what he called artificial means of producing effect, that when the day came for the members of the Royal Academy to varnish their pictures, after being hung up for the Exhibition, it was only by the greatest persuasion he would consent to varnish his at all; saying, that he did not approve such helps, every picture should be painted so as to produce its due effect without them.

His colouring in many of his pictures was as rich as it possibly could be, but never staring, never extravagant, never like a tailor's pattern-book—attractive by violent opposition of black, white, blue, and red. I have heard him remark, that, even a portion of Nature herself, so surrounded by glare, would be killed, just as the delicate roseate complexion of a blooming girl is rendered pale and dim, if viewed in the midst of lamplight, or in a room of gaudy, artificial accompaniments.

Stothard's practice was never to paint a picture for Somerset House, but when the time came for sending in, to take almost any that lay about his painting-room, or that was hanging up in his drawing-room, for which he happened to have *a frame that would fit*, and to send it off for the Exhibition. Some of these were so small that they were often scarcely visible in the surrounding combination of large canvasses and broad gilt frames; and that harmony and repose, that truth of colour, which was so beautiful and so perfectly natural in him, was in a moment overpowered by the meretricious glare of the place.

Many of Stothard's friends pointed out to him the policy of consulting a little more the taste of the public at the Exhibition, and wished to prevail with him to paint a picture expressly for that atmosphere; but he never heeded them. He would not step an

inch out of his way to gain *popularity*, when he was fure of *fame*; and so little had he of the tact of the world within himself, that he never could comprehend its utility. He had not one thought that was worldly in his own mind, and never, therefore, painted for money as money. Painting was his profession, and if he gained by it sufficient to live respectably, and to leave something to his children at his death, he was satisfied; but he never made mere pecuniary return the object of any one picture that he executed. Had he done so, and possessed more worldly tact, it is well known he might have died rich; for he had always more to do than he could execute without the most unwearied application, so much was he at all times estimated by the publishers for the varied power of his imagination in the art of illustration and design.

In painting, as in literature, we sometimes see that if the artist pursues only the quiet, unobtrusive mode of presenting his works before the world—if he is not thrust into notice by himself or by his friends—if no great patron takes him by the hand, and his name is seldom seen in print; these circumstances will combine to his present injury, since his fame cannot spread whilst he is too little noticed to be known to more than the favoured few. But time will do him justice; and though the earth may have closed over him ere this take place, his reputation will not eventually suffer. The genius of Stothard—though it can only be said within the last few years to have been spoken of, as it deserves to be, by the public at large—was, from a very early period, duly estimated by men of real judgment, whose praise is often the long forerunner of public fame.

Of such exceeding beauty were Stothard's early designs, that when Sir John Hawkins, who was about to edit and republish the old





DON QUIXOTE

Steward del.

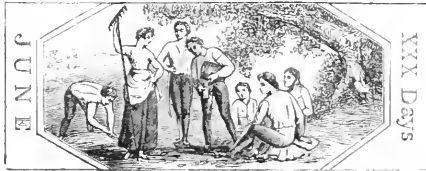
Angus Sculp.

drama of Ignoramus, applied to Sir Joshua Reynolds to design the frontispiece for the book, Sir Joshua referred him to one who was then but a rising artist, saying, "Go to young Stothard, he will design it much better than I can." Stothard always spoke of Reynolds as the master who revived the art of painting in this country as a national one, and who was the first to raise it from that low ebb into which it had sunk during the reign of George II., and at the commencement of that of George III. The foundation of the Royal Academy, under the patronage of the last-named sovereign, gave that opportunity and impetus to talent which has since been attended with such happy and promising results. Fortunate was it for Stothard, that, even before the foundation of the Royal Academy, there was established, *pro tempore*, the Academy of Arts, where young men had an opportunity afforded them of copying from the antique. The rooms of this institution were situated, as already noticed, in Maiden Lane; and there he practised with indefatigable industry.

About that time, and before he had so deeply studied the works of Raphael, he executed some drawings and paintings that remind one a good deal of Mortimer. The last named artist was unquestionably a man of great genius, and there was an imaginative character in all his works very likely to fascinate a young student, so as to become a follower in his school, ere his mind was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the old masters. After his intense study of Raphael, the most rapid and remarkable improvement may be traced in Stothard's early designs; some of which, for simplicity and beauty, were equal to any of his latest compositions. Though to be considered an *imitator* generally implies, at the best, but a very doubtful praise, yet he had felt pleased

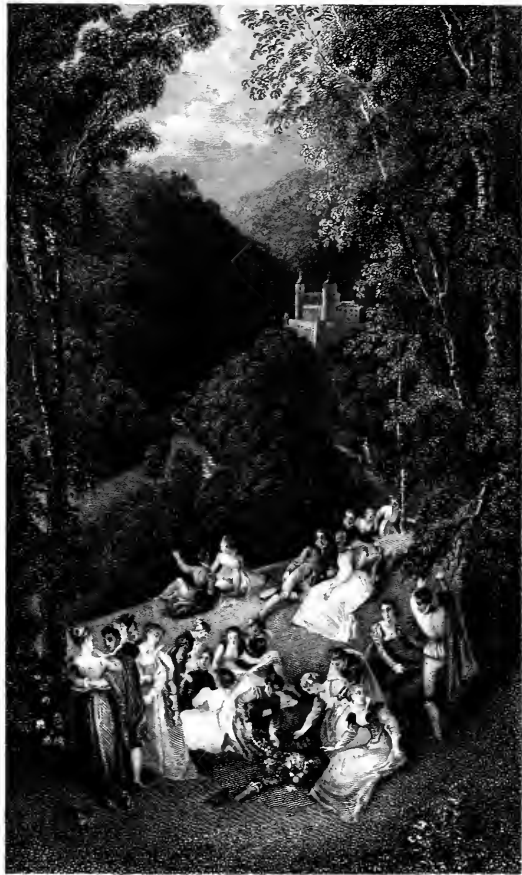
when, in early life, he had been occasionally told that he imitated Raphael. He was pleased, no doubt, because he knew what those who told him so really meant by the word *imitator*, though they did not exactly use the right term to explain their meaning.

In all arts, as in all things of human acquisition, skill and perfection do not fall down from the clouds upon our heads; we must work hard to get them; and in order to attempt excellence, we must begin by studying what is excellent. To study a great



Pocket-book Vignette for 1803.

painter (as a writer reads over and over again a great author), in order to become so thoroughly imbued with his spirit that the student may, in a very considerable degree, learn to see and feel as he saw and felt (if he have in himself the true capacity of sight and feeling), is wholly different from mere servile imitation. Mere imitation, in anything, is like the portrait painter who catches only the outward markings and peculiarities of the features of his sitter; such as the prominent nose, mouth, or chin; but who gives not one particle of the spirit which is within, that conveys life and expression to those features; in short, he gives not one of those graces that emanate alone from the mind. Hence arises the marked difference (and they are wide asunder) between *similarity* and *imitation*. In literature, and the fine arts, similarity denotes kindred in genus, imitation only in the resemblance of species; *similarity* was what Stothard gained by his close study of Raphael, and that severe schooling of his own judgment which was ever after so conspicuous



Richard S. A.

Engraved by R. Brandard

SANS SOUCI

in all his works. He was also a great admirer of the gay, the graceful, the festal spirit of Watteau; and his own paintings of



Sans Souci. From the *Eijou*, published in 1657.

what he termed Sans Souci, and the characters of Boccaccio's Decameron regaling in the garden when about to listen to the

recital of the first tale, for airiness and grace, and beauty of colour, are equal to any of Watteau's productions.*

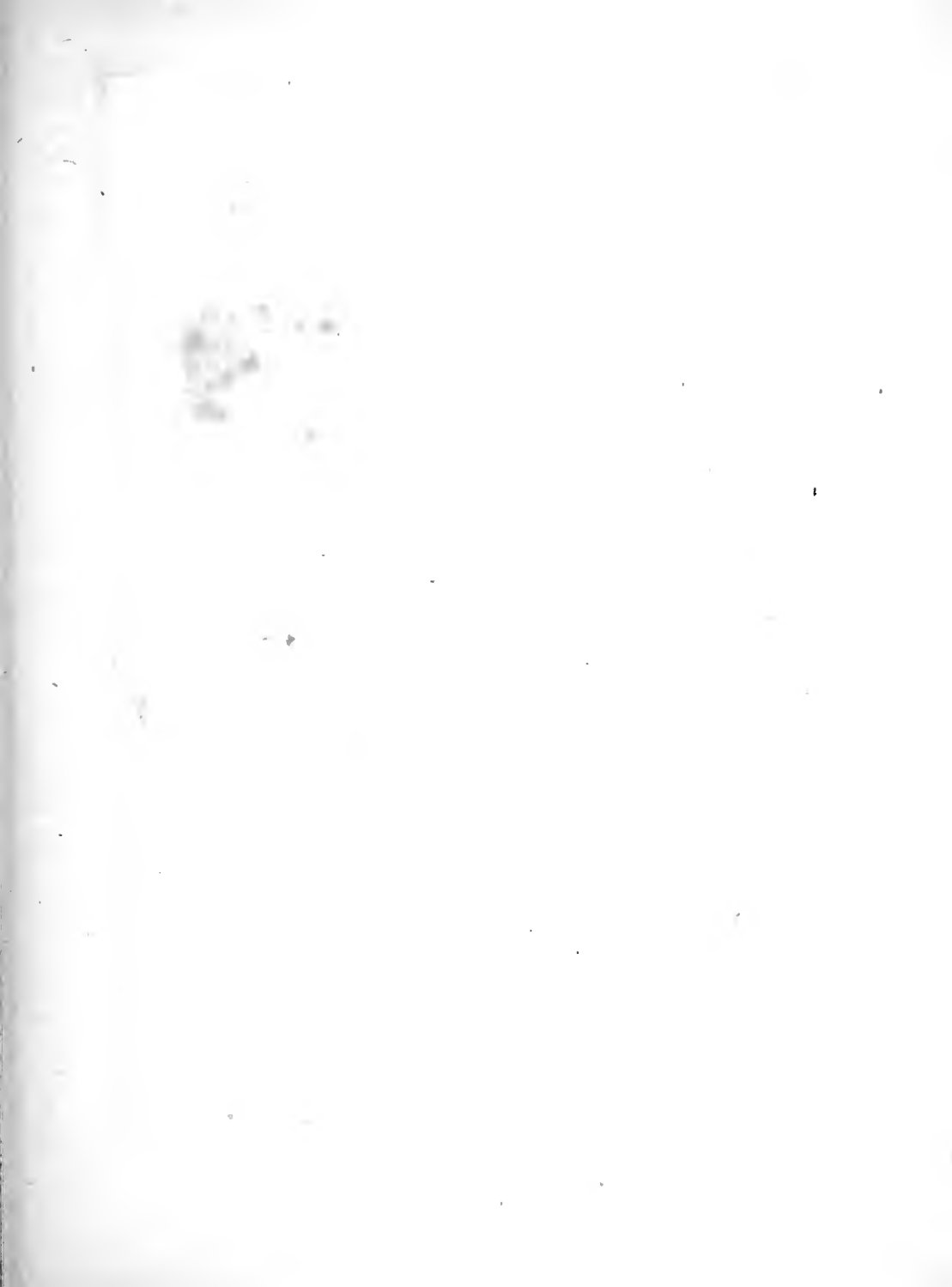
I have already mentioned, some of Stothard's earliest works were his embellishments for the *Novelist's Magazine*, published by Harrison. They were generally very well engraved: the designs were most beautiful, in that chaste and graceful style which he had brought to such perfection. These designs formed an era in the history of book illustration, by their being the first which supplied good drawings and engravings to the publishers. They for ever banished those miserable caricatures intended for illustrations, which we may still see in volumes printed about seventy or eighty years ago.

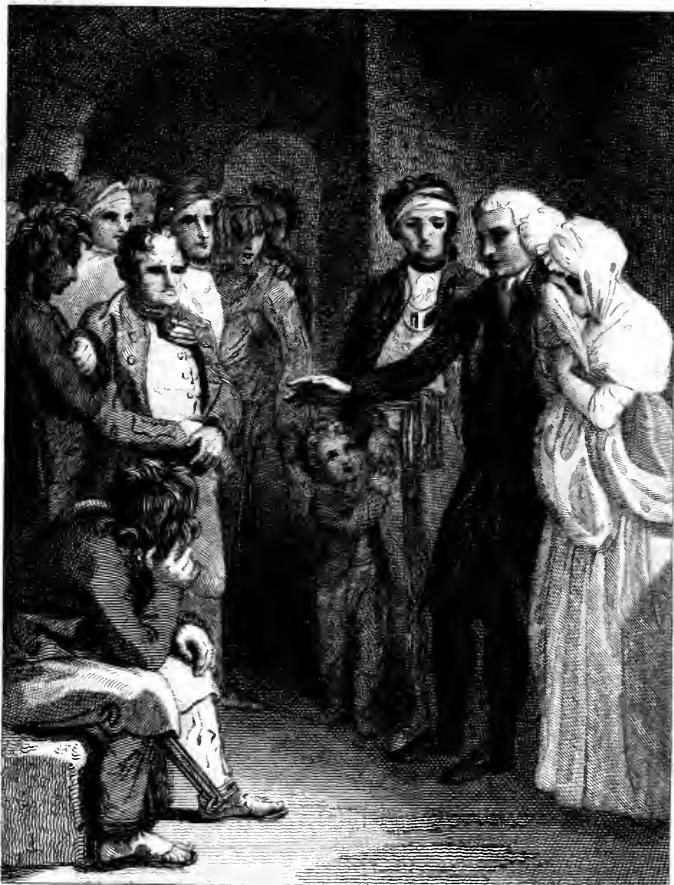
* These most beautiful pictures, copied designs, are in the possession of Mr. Rogers, by Stothard himself, from his original the poet, in St. James's Place.



LOVE-SONGS.

104





Northard del.

London, Du. 26.

Murder, June 1826.

Parley sc.

CHAPTER VII.

Stothard illustrates Bell's Shakespeare and poets—His series of paintings from the former—His comic humour—Characters from Shakespeare, the Spectator, and Don Quixote—His study of ancient costume—His works found in remote parts of the world—Stothard depicts his dream—His Una—Children in the wood—Phyllis and Brunette—Raving and Melancholy Madnefs—Boadicea, &c.

STOTHARD, in early life, was employed in illustrating Bell's Shakespeare and Bell's Poets. Excellent as were his designs for the first work, he afterwards surpassed them in his most beautiful compositions, painted in oils for some costly edition of the great dramatic poet. Very many years ago, the last-named paintings were collected together and exhibited, previous to being sold by public auction. I shall never forget the delight I experienced on viewing them; they brought all the creatures of Shakespeare's imagination so vividly before one. Admirable as Stothard was in all his designs, he was, I think, greatest when embodying the conceptions of Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, or Chaucer; nor was he much less excellent when he painted for Col. Johnes, at his princely feat of Hafod, in Wales, his chivalrous series of designs in illustration of Froissart. His genius also displayed its richness and its versatility, in bringing before our eyes the comic adventures of Don Quixote, and his faithful squire, Sancho Panza. Stothard, though a grave and reserved man in general society, and by no

means a great talker (and his deafness rendered him more silent as it increased upon him), was not without that native cheerfulness, and that spice of humour, which is invariably found to be one of the many component parts in the properties that form the mind of a man of genius—it exists even in melancholy minds of this nature—of which we have a proof in the dejected Cowper's inimitable story of Johnny Gilpin.



Tristram Shandy: Dr. Slop reading the Romish form of excommunication; from the *Novelist's Magazine*, published 1781.

Such a man may be silent in general company, and cheerless when he does not find a community of spirit, a response of



St. Louis P.A.

Aug. 1854.

© 1854 J. D.

Act 2. Sc. 1.

thought, taste, and feeling in his companions; one half the world may think him eccentric, and the other half may consider him dull, and may feel that though he is not a fool (for no man of genius was ever yet taken for that, even by the most ignorant), there is something about him they cannot understand, cannot assimilate with; yet with those who know him well, who can strike upon the key-note of his mind, and awaken the responsive chord, to whom he therefore unfolds himself in the freedom of social and domestic life, he will, I think, invariably be found to possess either the power of humour in himself, or a very high relish for it in others.* Stothard had an exquisite feeling for humour; and his *drolleries* (to use the old term of the Dutch school) possessed that nice distinction which rendered them superior to many celebrated paintings of the Flemish artists. His humour never descended to low incident in common life, which often disgusts by its grossness; it may be said that his genius was fine in comedy, but it never sunk into farce.

Stothard was truly *the* painter of the olden time—of early poets and writers; for no artist ever so completely identified himself with the simplicity of their days, with the domestic manners and habits of their period. His mind was familiar with the spirit of those remote ages; he could fall back upon them, and breathe in their air, and move in their warlike, social, rural, or their courtly circles, as familiarly as in his own. His pictures, therefore,

* The above observations were written before the writer had read that inimitable book *The Doctor*. It is not a little gratifying to find, therefore, that the same

opinion on humour being a component part of the mind of a man of genius, is there insisted on in a manner the most striking and convincing.

of scenes and characters, such as were recorded by Chaucer or Froissart, had a truth about them, as well as an imaginative beauty, that gave to each an individual identity, and wanting which no illustration of such works, will ever deeply impress the memory, or assist the mind, in giving, as it were, a bodily and visible existence to the historian and the poet.

As an instance of the wondrous union in Stothard, of the grandeur of his conception, of his airiness, the play of his fancy, and the rich vein of his humour, I would mention his painting (I believe it has never yet been engraved) of *Shakespeare's Characters*.* I speak of it from memory only—for it is long since I have seen it—yet it is one of those paintings that we can close our eyes, and see again in our mental vision, even in their detail, years after we have looked on the thing itself. I can do so now.

What grandeur is there in that figure of Lady Macbeth bearing the dagger, the fatal weapon with which Duncan, who bore his honours so meekly, was treacherously dispatched by her vacillating husband. She is in the attitude of looking up to heaven, not as if invoking its protection or its mercy, but with something of that grand spirit of defiance, even in sin, which Milton contrives to infuse into the Devil—and Shakespeare into this woman's soul; a spirit that we involuntarily respect (whilst we condemn and abhor it) for its firmness and consistency of courage; in which we see wickedness taken up in place of a right principle for a high object, but never as the result of a momentary weakness yielding to temptation. Shakespeare and Milton, particularly the former,

* For splendour in composition and colour, Stothard's *Peace*, which he painted for Mr. Champernown, may also be cited. He received for it 100*l*. It was not a large picture.



possessed the art, in a very wonderful degree, of making us awe-stricken in the presence of their bold bad characters, yet without a single touch of their sophistry being capable of inoculating or corrupting us. We gaze on such beings in their progress of evil, as we do on the fires of a Vesuvius, in full admiration of the almost preternatural glow of the flame, the rolling of the smoke, and the grandeur of the volleying horrors of the eruption, but with an ever-present sense of their destructiveness, their ruinous, their calamitous, power.

And then the darkness and the clouds of the background, which Stothard has harmonised so completely with all that portion of the picture devoted to the tragic muse—to the witches, to Banquo, to Lear, that poor old man upon whose silvered head the pitiless pelting of the storm bursts with such unmitigable fury; yet the hurly-burly without is nothing to those bitter feelings within, which are roused to madness by his unnatural daughters. And there are seen those daughters, standing like statues of pride and hard-heartedness, incapable of bending to aught of earth, or to the common dictates of humanity.

And how beautifully has Stothard formed the union between the tragic and the comic portions of the picture. This is effected by means of those airy figures, those “elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,” which belong to the *Tempest*; those creatures of fancy (which either tragedy or comedy might claim as her own) to call forth the wild winds, the sea fires, or to assist in the horrors of a ship-wrecking storm; or to lead astray, with sport and frolic, the drunken *Trinculo* and his companions. These he has introduced with exquisite skill, so as to form them into a group, which might be termed the neutral band of the picture,

where the subjects of tragedy and comedy approximate, but do not jostle each other by a too sudden contact. The gravity of *Prospero*, his attitude of command, and his lovely daughter by his side, with the ship seen in distress in the background, are delightfully relieved, and saved from being overpowered by too much gloom from the darkening sky, by the bright and curled cloud above, with *Ariel* in the midst, leading on the troop of winged and fluttering spirits, with an airiness and a buoyancy which make them seem as forms of a lighter material than that of flesh and blood. We can fancy that the lightest vapour would render such beings invisible; and that *Ferdinand*, when he listens to their music—the fairy band of musicians unseen—would very naturally with “wonder look about,” and enquire whence might be their strains, of earth or of the air? I always admired this picture, as one of the happiest efforts of Stothard’s imagination. It may be considered like the *dramatis personæ* of a play—an index or introduction to all his other designs and scenes from Shakespeare.

I was one of those who had the good fortune to see them all together, before they were sold and dispersed; and I never can cease to regret that such a collection was not purchased at the NATION’S cost, as national property; for they were, as a whole, the most beautiful series of designs that had ever been produced in illustration of the works of the greatest English poet, executed by the greatest English painter, for such was Stothard. Flaxman agreed in the opinion, and in the wish, that it had been so; and that it was deeply to be regretted such a collection should ever have been scattered. That eminent sculptor purchased some of these pictures, which I afterwards saw at his house. Amongst them was a lovely oil painting, rich as an old master in colour, of *Ferdinand*



Engraved by J. G. Kneller

1840

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CROWN

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY J. G. KNELLER, 1840.

led on from the shore by *Ariel* and his train, singing aloft, "Come unto these yellow sands." There were several of these paintings, but not the best, I believe, in the hands of some publisher of London, who purposed (so was I informed) selling them by auction. If he has done so or not, I cannot tell. What a pity it is that some effort is not made by those entrusted with the conduct of the National Gallery, to recover, purchase, and once more bring together, the whole series. Stothard's fancy literally revelled when Shakespeare was his theme. His conceptions of the fairy beings of the poet had in them all the wildness and imagination of their great author, yet so chastened with an attention to probability, in thus picturing creatures and things beyond this "visible diurnal sphere," that his supernatural subjects became natural. Had fairies existed, they would have chosen him as the favoured painter of Fairyland.

I recollect a little anecdote connected with the subject, that is not unworthy to be mentioned, since it shows by what fine springs, what associations in a mind such as his, the spirit of one art connects itself with another. Stothard, though he had been in North Wales, had never heard the harp played alone. In early life I was fond of it, and one evening he begged me to play to him upon that instrument. I did so, and found that the music which most pleased him was such as had in it melody. There was one air that delighted him — Purcell's beautiful "Come unto these yellow sands;" the words from the *Tempest*. This was his great favourite; he could paint from the fancy and feeling it inspired.

Amongst his most poetically conceived designs, in illustration of Shakespeare, may be named Richard's Dream, the night before the battle of Bosworth Field. The ghosts of the murdered, which gather round his couch, whilst they possess him with "thick coming

fancies” of horror and affright, and bid him “despair and die,” have in them a grandeur (especially the figure with long drapery in the foreground) that is truly impressive ; and the attitude of the

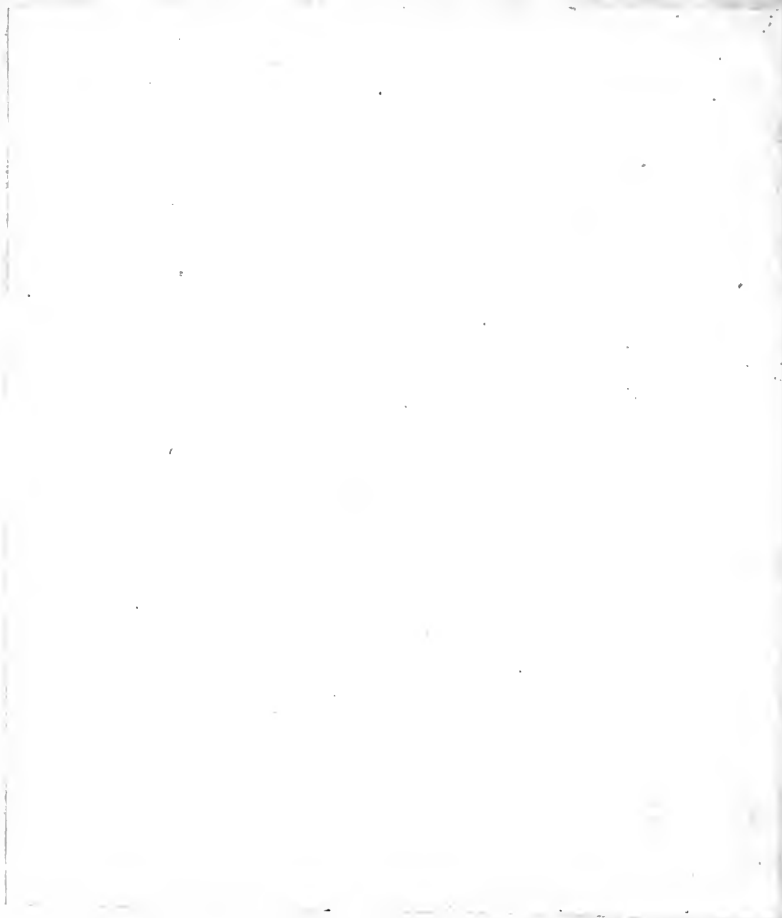


The ghosts appearing to Richard, the night before the Battle of Bosworth Field.

sleeping tyrant, without the slightest violence or exaggeration, shows the struggles of a perturbed mind, for which there is no rest.

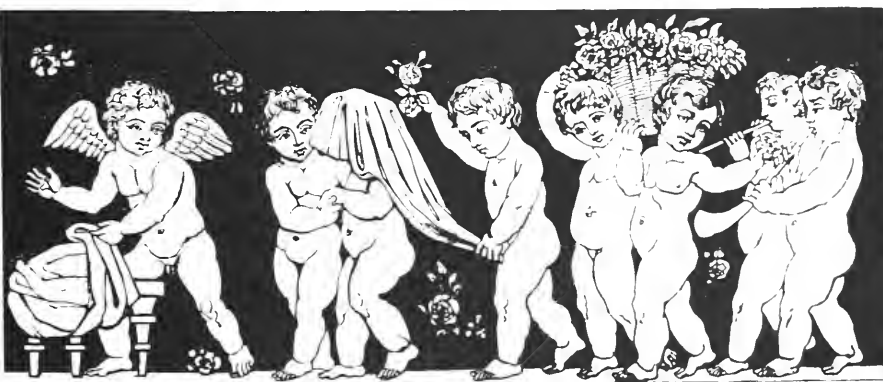
In Stothard's illustrations of Shakespeare, his comic humour is of the finest order. It tells the story (as in his Catherine and







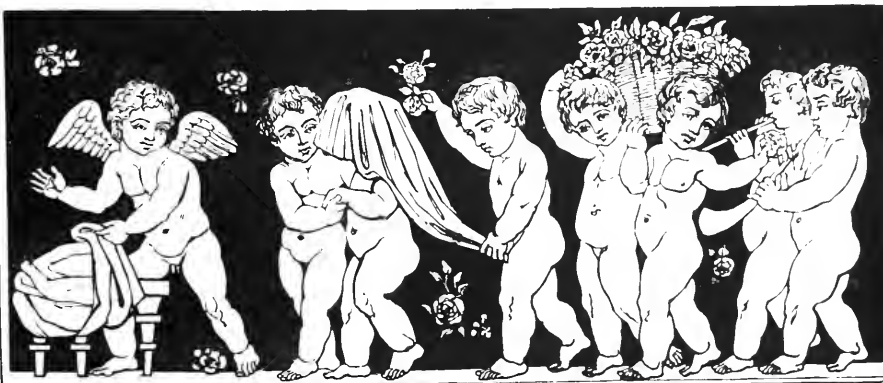
LIFE OF
THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A.





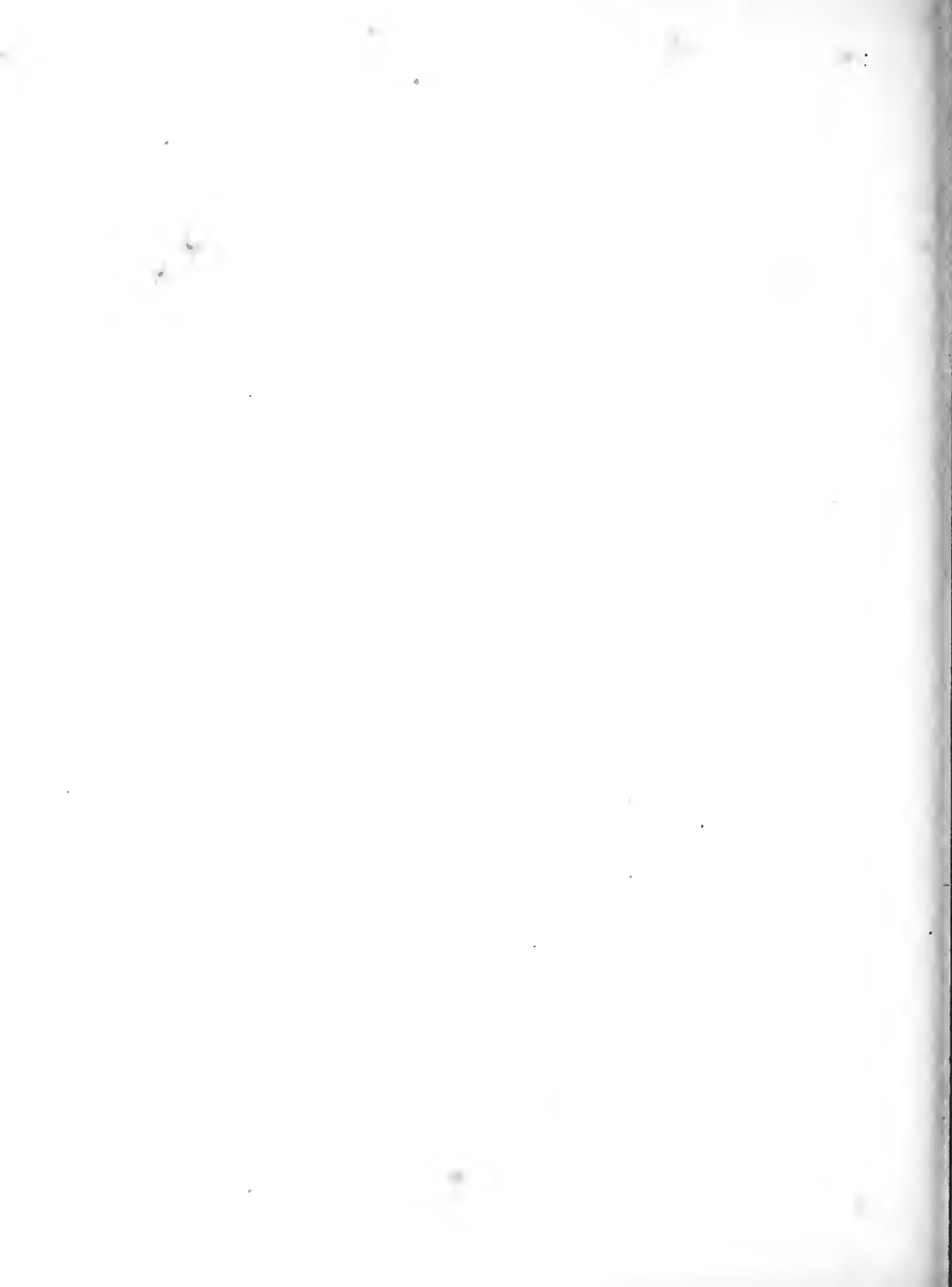


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